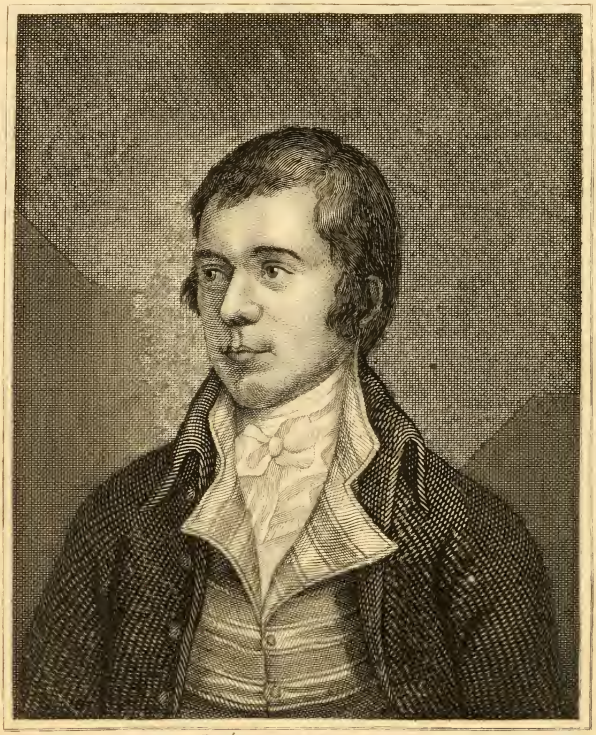

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ROBERT BURNS.

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THE

WORKS

OF

ROBERT BURNS;

CONTAINING HIS LIFE;

BY

JOHN LOCKHART, ESQ.

THE POETRY AND CORRESPONDENCE OF DR. CURRIE'S EDITION;

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES OF THE POET BY HIMSELF, GILBERT BURNS, PROFESSOR STEWART, AND OTHERS;

ESSAY ON SCOTTISH POETRY,

INCLUDING

THE POETRY OF BURNS, BY DR. CURRIE;

Burns's Songs,

FROM JOHNSON'S "MUSICAL MUSEUM," AND "THOMPSON'S SELECT MELODIES;"

SELECT SCOTTISH SONGS OF THE OTHER POETS,

FROM THE BEST COLLECTIONS,

WITH BURNS'S REMARKS.

FORMING, IN ONE WORK, THE TRUEST EXHIBITION OF THE MAN AND THE POET AND THE FULLEST EDITION OF HIS POETRY AND PROSE WRITINGS HITHERTO PUBLISHED.

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NOTICE

TO

THE PRESENT EDITION.

In the Dedication of the Life of Burns by Dr. Currie to his friend Captain Graham Moore, the learned Doctor thus expresses himself as to his Editorial office:—"The task was beset with considerable difficulties, and "men of established reputation naturally declined an undertaking, to the "performance of which it was scarcely to be hoped that general approba- "tion could be obtained by any exertion of judgment or temper. To such "an office my place of residence, my accustomed studies, and my occu- "pations, were certainly little suited. But the partiality of Mr. Syme "thought me, in other respects, not unqualified; and his solicitations, "joined to those of our excellent friend and relation, Mrs. Dunlop, and of "other friends of the family of the poet, I have not been able to resist."

These sentences contain singular avowals. They are somehow apt to suggest, what we have all heard before, that some are born to honour, while others have honours thrust upon them. The Doctor's squeamishness in favour of persons of *established reputation*, who might be chary of a ticklish and impracticable, if not an odious task, is in ludicrous contrast with the facts as they have since fallen out. Have we not seen the master-spirits of the age, Scott, Byron, Campbell, honouring in Burns a kindred, if not a superior genius, and, like passionate devotees, doing him homage? They have all *voluntarily* written of him; and their recorded opinions evince no feelings of shyness, but the reverse: they not only honour, but write as if honoured by their theme. But let us leave the subject, by merely pointing attention to the Doctor's mode of treating it, as a decisive test of the evil days and evil tongues amidst which the poet had fallen, and of the existence of that deplorable party-spirit, during which the facts involving his character as a man, and his reputation as a poet, could neither be correctly stated, nor fairly estimated.

It is true, Dr. Currie's Life contained invaluable materials. The poet's auto-biographical letter to Dr. Moore,—indeed the whole of his letters,—the letters of his brother Gilbert,—of Professor Dugald Stewart,—of Mr. Murdoch and of Mr. Syme, and the other contributors, are invaluable materials. They form truly the very backbone of the poet's life, as edited by

Dr. Currie. They must ever be regarded as precious relics; and however largely they may be used as a part of a biographical work, they ought also to be presented in the separate form, entire; for, taken in connection with the general correspondence, they will be found to be curiously illustrative of the then state of society in Scotland, and moreover to contain manifold and undoubted proofs of the diffusion and actual existence, amongst Scotsmen of all degrees, of that literary talent, which had only been inferred, hypothetically, from the nature of her elementary institutions.

We have no wish to detract from the high reputation of Dr. Currie. It will however be remarked, that the biographical part of his labours, as stated by himself, involve little beyond the office of *redacteur*.—He was not upon the spot, but living in England, and he was engaged with professional avocations. If truth lies at the bottom of the well, he had neither the time nor the means to fish it up. Accordingly, it is not pretended that he proceeded upon his own views, formed, on any single occasion, after a painful or pains-taking scrutiny; or that, in giving a picture of the man and the poet, he did more than present to the public what had come to him entirely at second-hand, and upon the authority of others; however tainted or perverted the matter might have been, from the then generally diseased state of the public mind. The Life of the poet, compiled under such circumstances, was necessarily defective,—nay it did him positive injustice in various respects, particularly as to his personal habits and moral character. These were represented with exaggerated and hideous features, unwarranted by truth, and having their chief origin in the malignant virulence of party strife.

The want of a Life of Burns, more correctly drawn, was long felt. This is evident from the nature of the notices bestowed, in the periodicals of the time, upon the successive works of Walker and Irving, who each of them attempted the task of his biographer; and upon the publications of Cromek, who in his "Reliques," and "Select Scottish Songs," brought to light much interesting and original matter. But these attempts only whetted and kept alive the general feeling, which was not gratified in its full extent until nearly thirty years after the publication of Dr. Currie's work. It was not until 1827 that a historian, worthy of the poet, appeared in the person of Mr. John Lockhart, the son-in-law of Sir Walter Scott, and (rather a discordant title), Editor of the London Quarterly Review. He in that year published a Life of Burns, both in the separate form, and as a part of that excellent repertory known by the title of *Constable's Miscellany*.

It is only necessary to read Mr. Lockhart's Life of Burns, to be satisfied of his qualifications for the task, and that he has succeeded in putting them, after an upright and conscientious manner, to the proper use. It certainly appears odd, that a high Tory functionary should stand out the champion of the Bard who sung,

"A man's a man for a' that:"

and who, because of his democratic tendencies, not only missed of public patronage, but moreover had long to sustain every humiliation and indirect persecution the local satellites of intolerance could fling upon him. But the lapse of time, and the spread of intelligence, have done much to remove prejudices and soften asperities; to say nothing of that independence of mind which always adheres to true genius, and which the circumstances in the poet's history naturally roused and excited in a kindred spirit. Mr.

Lockhart, it will farther be observed, besides having compiled his work under circumstances of a general nature much more favourable to accurate delineation, likewise set about the task in a more philosophical manner than the preceding biographers. He judged for himself; he took neither facts nor opinions at second-hand; but inquired, studied, compared, and where doubtful, extricated the facts in the most judicious and careful manner. It may be said, that that portion of the poet's mantle which invested his sturdiness of temper, has fallen upon the biographer, who, as the poet did, always thinks and speaks for himself.

These being our sentiments of Mr. Lockhart's Life of Burns, we have preferred it, as by far the most suitable biographical accompaniment of the present edition of his works. It has been our study to insert, in this edition, every thing hitherto published, and fit to be published, of which Burns was the author. The reader will find here all that is contained in Dr. Currie's edition of 1800, with the pieces brought to light by all the respectable authors who have since written or published of Burns.—The following general heads will show the nature and extent of the present work.

1. The Life by Lockhart.
2. The Poems, as published in the Kilmarnock and first Edinburgh edition, with the poet's own prefaces to these editions, and also as published in Dr. Currie's edition of 1800; having superadded the pieces since brought forward by Walker, Irving, Morison, Paul, and Cromek.
3. Essay (by Dr. Currie), on Scottish Poetry, including the Poetry of Burns.
4. Select Scottish Songs *not* Burns's, upwards of 200 in number, and many of them having his Annotations, Historical and Critical, prefixed.
5. Burns's Songs, collected from Johnson's Musical Museum, the larger work of Thomson, and from the publications of Cromek, Cunningham, and Chalmers, nearly 200 in number.
6. The Correspondence, including all the Letters published by Dr. Currie, besides a number subsequently recovered, published by Cromek and others.

The whole forming the best picture of the man and the poet, and the only complete edition of his writings, in *one* work, hitherto offered to the public. Besides a portrait of the poet, executed by an able artist, long familiar with the original picture by Nasmyth, there is also here presented, (an entire novelty), a fac-simile of the poet's handwriting. It was at one time matter of surprise that the Ploughman should have been a man of genius and a poet. If any such curious persons still exist, they will of course be likewise surprised to find that he was so good a penman.

New York, Sept. 11, 1832.

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LIFE

OF

ROBERT BURNS.

CHAPTER I.

CONTENTS.—*The Poet's Birth*, 1759—*Circumstances and peculiar Character of his Father and Mother—Hardships of his Early Years—Sources, such as they were, of his Mental Improvement—Commenceth Love and Poetry at* 16.

"My father was a farmer upon the Carrick Border,
And soberly he brought me up in decency and order."

ROBERT BURNS was born on the 25th of January 1759, in a clay-built cottage, about two miles to the south of the town of Ayr, and in the immediate vicinity of the Kirk of Alloway, and the "Auld Brig o' Doon." About a week afterwards, part of the frail dwelling, which his father had constructed with his own hands, gave way at midnight; and the infant-poet and his mother were carried through the storm, to the shelter of a neighbouring hovel. The father, William *Burnes* or *Burness*, (for so he spelt his name), was the son of a farmer in Kincardineshire, whence he removed at 19 years of age, in consequence of domestic embarrassments. The farm on which the family lived, formed part of the estate forfeited, in consequence of the rebellion of 1715, by the noble house of Keith Marischall; and the poet took pleasure in saying, that his humble ancestors shared the principles and the fall of their chiefs. Indeed, after William Burnes settled in the west of Scotland, there prevailed a vague notion that he himself had *been out* in the insurrection of 1745–6; but though Robert would fain have interpreted his father's silence in favour of a tale which flattered his imagination, his brother Gilbert always treated it as a mere fiction, and such it was. Gilbert found among his father's papers a certificate of the minister of his native parish, testifying that "the bearer, William Burnes, had no hand in the late wicked rebellion." It is easy to suppose that when any obscure northern stranger fixed himself in those days in the Low Country, such rumours were likely enough to be circulated concerning him.

William Burnes laboured for some years in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh as a gardener, and then found his way into Ayrshire. At the time when Robert was born, he was gardener and overseer to a gentleman of small estate, Mr. Ferguson of Doonholm; but resided on a few acres of land, which he had on lease from another proprietor, and where he had originally intended to establish himself as a nurseryman. He married Agnes Brown in December 1757, and the poet was their first-born. William Burnes seems to have been, in his humble station, a man eminently entitled to respect. He had received the ordinary learning of a Scottish parish school, and profited largely both by that and by his own experience in the world. "I have met with few," (said the poet, after he had himself seen a good deal of mankind), "who understood men, their manners, and their ways, equal to my father." He was a strictly religious man. There exists in his handwriting a little manual of theology, in the form of a dialogue, which he drew up for the use of his children, and from which it appears that he had adopted more of the Arminian than of the Calvinistic *doctrine;* a circumstance not to be wondered at, when we consider that he had been educated in a district which was never numbered among the strongholds of the Presbyterian church. The affectionate reverence with which his children ever regarded him, is attested by all who have described him as he appeared in his domestic circle; but there needs no evidence beside that of the poet himself, who has painted, in colours that will never fade, "the saint, the father, and the husband," of *The Cottar's Saturday Night.*

Agnes Brown, the wife of this good man, is described as "a very sagacious woman, without any appearance of forwardness, or awkwardness of manner;" and it seems that, in features, and, as he grew up, in general address, the poet resembled her more than his father. She had an inexhaustible store of ballads and traditionary tales, and appears to have nourished his infant imagination by this means, while her husband paid more attention to "the weightier matters of the law." These worthy people laboured hard for the support of an increasing family. William was occupied with Mr. Ferguson's service, and Agnes contrived to manage a small dairy as well as her children. But though their honesty and diligence merited better things, their condition continued to be very uncomfortable; and our poet, (in his letter to Dr. Moore), accounts distinctly for his being born and bred "a very poor man's son," by the remark, that "stubborn ungainly integrity, and headlong ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances."

These defects of temper did not, however, obscure the sterling worth of William Burnes in the eyes of Mr. Ferguson; who, when his gardener expressed a wish to try his for tuneon a farm of his, then vacant, and confessed at the same time his inability to meet the charges of stocking it, at once advanced £100 towards the removal of the difficulty. Burnes accordingly removed to this farm (that of Mount Oliphant, in the parish of Ayr) at Whitsuntide 1766, when his eldest son was between six and seven years of age. But the soil proved to be of the most ungrateful description; and Mr. Ferguson dying, and his affairs falling into the hands of a harsh *factor*, (who afterwards sat for his picture in the *Twa Dogs*), Burnes was glad to give up his bargain at the end of six years. He then removed about ten miles to a larger and better farm, that of Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton. But here, after a short interval of prosperity, some unfortunate misunderstanding took place as to the conditions of the lease; the

dispute was referred to arbitration; and, after three years of suspense, the result involved Burnes in ruin. The worthy man lived to know of this decision; but death saved him from witnessing its necessary consequences. He died of consumption on the 13th February 1784. Severe labour, and hopes only renewed to be baffled, had at last exhausted a robust but irritable structure and temperament of body and of mind.

In the midst of the harassing struggles which found this termination, William Burnes appears to have used his utmost exertions for promoting the mental improvement of his children—a duty rarely neglected by Scottish parents, however humble their station, and scanty their means may be. Robert was sent, in his sixth year, to a small school at Alloway Miln, about a mile from the house in which he was born; but Campbell, the teacher, being in the course of a few months removed to another situation, Burnes and four or five of his neighbours engaged Mr. John Murdoch to supply his place, lodging him by turns in their own houses, and ensuring to him a small payment of money quarterly. Robert Burns, and Gilbert his next brother, were the aptest and the favourite pupils of this worthy man, who survived till very lately, and who has, in a letter published at length by Currie, detailed, with honest pride, the part which he had in the early education of our poet. He became the frequent inmate and confidential friend of the family, and speaks with enthusiasm of the virtues of William Burnes, and of the peaceful and happy life of his humble abode.

"He was (says Murdoch) a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children in the path of virtue; not in driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are averse. He took care to find fault but very seldom; and therefore, when he did rebuke, he was listened to with a kind of reverential awe. A look of disapprobation was felt; a reproof was severely so: and a stripe with the *tawz*, even on the skirt of the coat, gave heart-felt pain, produced a loud lamentation, and brought forth a flood of tears.

"He had the art of gaining the esteem and good-will of those that were labourers under him. I think I never saw him angry but twice: the one time it was with the foreman of the band, for not reaping the field as he was desired; and the other time, it was with an old man, for using smutty inuendos and *double entendres*."——"In this mean cottage, of which I myself was at times an inhabitant, I really believe there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. *The Cottar's Saturday Night* will give some idea of the temper and manners that prevailed there."

The boys, under the joint tuition of Murdoch and their father, made rapid progress in reading, spelling, and writing; they committed psalms and hymns to memory with extraordinary ease—the teacher taking care (as he tells us) that they should understand the exact meaning of each word in the sentence ere they tried to get it by heart. "As soon," says he, "as they were capable of it, I taught them to turn verse into its natural prose order; sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words; and to supply all the ellipses. Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors, The books most commonly used in the school were the *Spelling Book*, the *New Testament*, the *Bible*, *Mason's Collection of Prose and Verse*, and *Fisher's English Grammar*."—"Gilbert always appeard to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit, than Robert. I at-

tempted to teach them a little church-music. Here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear, in particular, was remarkably dull, and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another. Robert's countenance was generally grave and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said, *Mirth, with thee I mean to live;* and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys, had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the Muses, he would never have guessed that *Robert* had a propensity of that kind."

" At those years," says the poet himself, in 1787, " I was by no means a favourite with anybody. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say *idiot* piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and particles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantraips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake off these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was *The Vision of Mirza,* and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, *How are thy servants blest, O Lord!* I particularly remember one half-stanza, which was music to my boyish ear—

> " For though on dreadful whirls we hung
> High on the broken wave—"

I met with these pieces in *Mason's English Collection,* one of my schoolbooks. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were, *The Life of Hannibal,* and *The History of Sir William Wallace.* Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bagpipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a tide of Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the flood-gates of life shut in eternal rest."

Murdoch continued his instructions until the family had been about two years at Mount Oliphant—when he left for a time that part of the country. " There being no school near us," says Gilbert Burns, " and our little services being already useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings by candle light—and in this way my two elder sisters received all the education they ever received." Gilbert tells an anecdote which must not be omitted here, since it furnishes an early instance of the liveliness of his brother's imagination. Murdoch, being on a visit to the family, read aloud one evening part of the tragedy of Titus Andronicus—the circle listened with the deepest interest until he came to Act 2, sc. 5, where Lavinia is introduced " with her hands cut off, and her

tongue cut out." At this the children entreated, with one voice, in an agony of distress, that their friend would read no more. "If ye will not hear the play out," said William Burnes, "it need not be left with you." —"If it be left," cries Robert, "I will burn it." His father was about to chide him for this return to Murdoch's kindness—but the good young man interfered, saying he liked to see so much sensibility, and left *The School for Love* in place of his truculent tragedy. At this time Robert was nine years of age. "Nothing," continues Gilbert Burns, "could be more retired than our general manner of living at Mount Oliphant; we rarely saw any body but the members of our own family. There were no boys of our own age, or near it, in the neighbourhood. Indeed the greatest part of the land in the vicinity was at that time possessed by shopkeepers, and people of that stamp, who had retired from business, or who kept their farm in the country, at the same time that they followed business in town. My father was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men; and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits. He borrowed *Salmon's Geographical Grammar* for us, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with the situation and history of the different countries in the world; while, from a book-society in Ayr, he procured for us the reading of *Derham's Physico* and *Astro-Theology*, and *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation*, to give us some idea of astronomy and natural history. Robert read all these books with an avidity and industry scarcely to be equalled. My father had been a subscriber to *Stackhouse's History of the Bible.* From this Robert collected a competent knowledge of ancient history; for *no book was so voluminous as to slacken his industry, or so antiquated as to damp his researches.*" A collection of letters by eminent English authors, is mentioned as having fallen into Burns's hands much about the same time, and greatly delighted him.

When Burns was about thirteen or fourteen years old, his father sent him and Gilbert "week about, during a summer quarter," to the parish school of Dalrymple, two or three miles distant from Mount Oliphant, for the improvement of their penmanship. The good man could not pay two fees; or his two boys could not be spared at the same time from the labour of the farm! "We lived very poorly," says the poet. "I was a dexterous ploughman for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother, (Gilbert), who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction, but so did not I. My indignation yet boils at the recollection of the scoundrel factor's insolent letters, which used to set us all in tears." Gilbert Burns gives his brother's situation at this period in greater detail —"To the buffetings of misfortune," says he, "we could only oppose hard labour and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in thrashing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old (for he was

now above fifty), broken down with the long-continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances, these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life, was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull headach, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed, in the night-time."

The year after this, Burns was able to gain three weeks of respite, one before, and two after the harvest, from the labours which were thus straining his youthful strength. His tutor Murdoch was now established in the town of Ayr, and the boy spent one of these weeks in revising the English grammar with him; the other two were given to French. He laboured enthusiastically in the new pursuit, and came home at the end of a fortnight with a dictionary and a *Telemaque*, of which he made such use at his leisure hours, by himself, that in a short time (if we may believe Gilbert) he was able to understand any ordinary book of French prose. His progress, whatever it really amounted to, was looked on as something of a prodigy; and a writing-master in Ayr, a friend of Murdoch, insisted that Robert Burns must next attempt *the rudiments of the Latin tongue.* He did so, but with little perseverance, we may be sure, since the results were of no sort of value. Burns's Latin consisted of a few scraps of hackneyed quotations, such as many that never looked into Ruddiman's Rudiments can apply, on occasion, quite as skilfully as he ever appears to have done. The matter is one of no importance; we might perhaps safely dismiss it with parodying what Ben Jonson said of Shakspeare; he had little French, and no Latin. He had read, however, and read well, ere his sixteenth year elapsed, no contemptible amount of the literature of his own country. In addition to the books which have already been mentioned, he tells us that, ere the family quitted Mount Oliphant, he had read "the *Spectator*, some plays of Shakspeare, Pope, (the *Homer* included), Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, Locke on the Human Understanding, Justice's *British Gardener's Directory*, Boyle's *Lectures*, Taylor's *Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin*, *A Select Collection of English Songs*, Hervey's *Meditations*," (a book which has ever been very popular among the Scottish peasantry), "and the Works of Allan Ramsay;" and Gilbert adds to this list *Pamela*, (the first novel either of the brothers read), two stray volumes of *Peregrine Pickle*, two of *Count Fathom*, and a single volume of "some English historian," containing the reigns of James I., and his son. The "Collection of Songs," says Burns, was my *vade mecum.* I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noticing the true, tender, or sublime, from affectation or fustian; and I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic-craft, such as it is."

He derived, during this period, considerable advantages from the vicinity of Mount Oliphant to the town of Ayr—a place then, and still, distinguished by the residence of many respectable gentlemen's families, and a consequent elegance of society and manners, not common in remote provincial situations. To his friend, Mr. Murdoch, he no doubt owed, in the first instance, whatever attentions he received there from people older as well

as higher than himself: some such persons appear to have taken a pleasure in lending him books, and surely no kindness could have been more useful to him than this. As for his coevals, he himself says, very justly, "It is not commonly at that green age that our young gentry have a just sense of the distance between them and their ragged playfellows. *My* young superiors," he proceeds, "never insulted the *clouterly* appearance of my plough-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books: among them, even then, I could pick up some observation; and one, whose heart I am sure not even the Munny Begum scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these, my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction,—but I was soon called to more serious evils."—(Letter to Moore). The condition of the family during the last two years of their residence at Mount Oliphant, when the struggle which ended in their removal was rapidly approaching its crisis, has been already described; nor need we dwell again on the untimely burden of sorrow, as well as toil, which fell to the share of the youthful poet, and which would have broken altogether any mind wherein feelings like his had existed, without strength like his to control them. The removal of the family to Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, took place when Burns was in his sixteenth year. He had some time before this made his first attempt in verse, and the occasion is thus described by himself in his letter to Moore. "This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of Rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature, a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language; but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a *bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass.* In short, she, altogether unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion, I cannot tell: you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan, when I looked and fingered over her little hand, to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel, to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song, which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moorlands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

"Thus with me began love and poetry; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment."

The earliest of the poet's productions is the little ballad,

" O once I loved a bonny lass.

Burns himself characterises it as " a very puerile and silly performance ;" yet it contains here and there lines of which he need hardly have been ashamed at any period of his life :—

" She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Baith decent and genteel,
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel."

" Silly and puerile as it is," said the poet, long afterwards, " I am always pleased with this song, as it recalls to my mind those happy days when my heart was yet honest, and my tongue sincere...I composed it in a wild enthusiasm of passion, and to this hour I never recollect it but my heart melts, my blood sallies, at the remembrance." (MS. Memorandum book, August 1783.)

In his first epistle to Lapraik (1785) he says—

" Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the crambo-jingle fell,
Tho' rude and rough ;
Yet crooning to a body's sell
Does weel eneugh."

And in some nobler verses, entitled " On my Early Days," we have the following passage :—

" I mind it weel in early date,
When I was beardless, young and blate,
And first could thrash the barn,
Or haud a yokin' o' the pleugh,
An' tho' forfoughten sair eneugh,
Yet unco proud to learn—
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckoned was,
An' wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass—
Still shearing and clearing
The tither stookit raw,
Wi' claivers and haivers
Wearing the day awa—
E'en then a wish, I mind its power,
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast :
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some useful plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang, at least :
The rough bur-thistle spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
And spared the symbol dear."

He is hardly to be envied who can contemplate without emotion, this exquisite picture of young nature and young genius. It was amidst such scenes that this extraordinary being felt those first indefinite stirrings of immortal ambition, which he has himself shadowed out under the magnificent image of " the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops, around the walls of his cave."

CHAPTER II.

CONTENTS.—*From 17 to 24—Robert and Gilbert Burns work to their Father, as Labourers, at stated Wages—At Rural Work the Poet feared no Competitor—This period not marked by much Mental Improvement—At Dancing-School—Progress in Love and Poetry—At School at Kirkoswald's—Bad Company—At Irvine—Flaxdressing—Becomes there Member of a Batchelors' Club.*

" O enviable early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care and guilt unknown!
How ill exchanged for riper times,
To feel the follies or the crimes
Of others—or my own!"

As has been already mentioned, William Burnes now quitted Mount Oliphant for Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, where, for some little space, fortune appeared to smile on his industry and frugality. Robert and Gilbert were employed by their father as regular labourers—he allowing them £7 of wages each per annum; from which sum, however, the value of any home-made clothes received by the youths was exactly deducted. Robert Burns's person, inured to daily toil, and continually exposed to every variety of weather, presented, before the usual time, every characteristic of robust and vigorous manhood. He says himself, that he never feared a competitor in any species of rural exertion; and Gilbert Burns, a man of uncommon bodily strength, adds, that neither he, nor any labourer he ever saw at work, was equal to the youthful poet, either in the corn field, or the severer tasks of the thrashing-floor. Gilbert says, that Robert's literary zeal slackened considerably after their removal to Tarbolton. He was separated from his acquaintances of the town of Ayr, and probably missed not only the stimulus of their conversation, but the kindness that had furnished him with his supply, such as it was, of books. But the main source of his change of habits about this period was, it is confessed on all hands, the precocious fervour of one of his own turbulent passions.

" In my seventeenth year," says Burns, " to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school.—My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o'-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of For-

tune, were the gate of nigardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I could never squeeze myself into it;—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriacism that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that, always where two or three met together, there was I among them. But far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant pour l'adorable moitié du genre humain.* My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and as in every other warfare in this world my fortune was various, sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions, and I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesman in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe."

In regard to the same critical period of Burns's life, his excellent brother writes as follows:—"I wonder how Robert could attribute to our father that lasting resentment of his going to a dancing-school against his will, of which he was incapable. I believe the truth was, that about this time he began to see the dangerous impetuosity of my brother's passions, as well as his not being amenable to counsel, which often irritated my father, and which he would naturally think a dancing-school was not likely to correct. But he was proud of Robert's genius, which he bestowed more expense on cultivating than on the rest of the family—and he was equally delighted with his warmth of heart, and conversational powers. He had indeed that dislike of dancing-schools which Robert mentions; but so far overcame it during Robert's first month of attendance, that he permitted the rest of the family that were fit for it, to accompany him during the second month. Robert excelled in dancing, and was for some time distractedly fond of it. And thus the seven years we lived in Tarbolton parish (extending from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of my brother's age) were not marked by much literary improvement; but, during this time, the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enlarge on. Though, when young, he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver. The symptoms of his passion were often such as nearly to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he *fainted, sunk, and died away;* but the agitations of his mind and body exceeded any thing of the kind I ever knew in real life. He had always a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself, or who had

more consequence in life. His love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination; and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captivator, as she appeared to others, and as she seemed when invested with the attributes he gave her. One generally reigned paramount in his affections; but as Yorick's affections flowed out toward Madame de L—— at the remise door, while the eternal vows of Eliza were upon him, so Robert was frequently encountering other attractions, which formed so many under-plots in the drama of his love."

Thus occupied with labour, love, and dancing, the youth "without an aim" found leisure occasionally to clothe the sufficiently various moods of his mind in rhymes. It was as early as seventeen, (he tells us),* that he wrote some stanzas which begin beautifully:

"I dream'd I lay where flowers were springing
Gaily in the sunny beam;
Listening to the wild birds singing,
By a fallen crystal stream.
Straight the sky grew black and daring,
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave,
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling *drumlie* wave.
Such was life's deceitful morning," &c.

On comparing these verses with those on "Handsome Nell," the advance achieved by the young bard in the course of two short years, must be regarded with admiration; nor should a minor circumstance be entirely overlooked, that in the piece which we have just been quoting, there occurs but one Scotch word. It was about this time, also, that he wrote a ballad of much less ambitious vein, which, years after, he says, he used to con over with delight, because of the faithfulness with which it recalled to him the circumstances and feelings of his opening manhood.

—"My father was a farmer upon the Carrick Border,
And carefully he brought me up in decency and order.
And bade me act a manly part, tho' I had ne'er a farthing;
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding.

Then out into the world my course I did determine;
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming;
My talents they were not the worst, nor yet my education;
Resolved was I at least to try to mend my situation.
. . . . . .
No help, nor hope, nor view had I, nor person to befriend me;
So I must toil, and sweat, and broil, and labour to sustain me.
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early;
For one, he said, to labour bred, was a match for fortune fairly.

Thus all obscure, unknown and poor, thro' life I'm doomed to wander;
Till down my weary bones I lay, in everlasting slumber.
No view, nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow;
I live to-day, as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow," &c.

These are the only two of his very early productions in which we have nothing expressly about love. The rest were composed to celebrate the charms of those rural beauties who followed each other in the dominion of

* Reliques, p. 242.

his fancy—or shared the capricious throne between them; and we may easily believe, that one who possessed, with his other qualifications, such powers of flattering, feared competitors as little in the diversions of his evenings as in the toils of his day.

The rural lover, in those districts, pursues his tender vocation in a style, the especial fascination of which town-bred swains may find it somewhat difficult to comprehend. After the labours of the day are over, nay, very often after he is supposed by the inmates of his own fireside to be in his bed, the happy youth thinks little of walking many long Scotch miles to the residence of his mistress, who, upon the signal of a tap at her window, comes forth to spend a soft hour or two beneath the harvest moon, or, if the weather be severe, (a circumstance which never prevents the journey from being accomplished), amidst the sheaves of her father's barn. This "chappin' out," as they call it, is a custom of which parents commonly wink at, if they do not openly approve, the observance; and the consequences are far, very far, more frequently quite harmless, than persons not familiar with the peculiar manners and feelings of our peasantry may find it easy to believe. Excursions of this class form the theme of almost all the songs which Burns is known to have produced about this period,—and such of these juvenile performances as have been preserved, are, without exception, beautiful. They show how powerfully his boyish fancy had been affected by the old rural minstrelsy of his own country, and how easily his native taste caught the secret of its charm. The truth and simplicity of nature breathe in every line—the images are always just, often originally happy—and the growing refinement of his ear and judgment, may be traced in the terser language and more mellow flow of each successive ballad.

The best of the songs written at this time is that beginning,—

"It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn rigs are bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie.
The time flew by wi' tentless heed,
Till, 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion she agreed
To see me thro' the barley."

We may let the poet carry on his own story. "A circumstance," says he, "which made some alteration on my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school (Kirkoswald's) to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c., in which I made a good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were till this time new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming *filette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my *sines* and *co-sines* for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel, like—

" Proserpine, gathering flowers,
Herself a fairer flower."———

" It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid, I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless. I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my school-fellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly; I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger. My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle,* were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; Sterne and Mackenzie—*Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling*—were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they found vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet."

Of the rhymes of those days, few, when he wrote his letter to Moore, had appeared in print. *Winter, a dirge,* an admirably versified piece, is of their number; *The Death of Poor Mailie, Mailie's Elegy,* and *John Barleycorn;* and one charming song, inspired by the Nymph of Kirkoswald's, whose attractions put an end to his trigonometry.

" Now westlin winds, and slaughtering guns,
Bring Autumn's pleasant weather;
The moorcock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather. . . .
—Peggy dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading green and yellow;
Come let us stray our gladsome way," &c.

John Barleycorn is a clever old ballad, very cleverly new-modelled and extended; but the *Death and Elegy of Poor Mailie* deserve more attention. The expiring animal's admonitions touching the education of the " poor toop lamb, her son and heir," and the " yowie, silly thing," her daughter, are from the same peculiar vein of sly homely wit, embedded upon fancy, which he afterwards dug with a bolder hand in the *Twa Dogs,* and perhaps to its utmost depth, in his *Death and Doctor Hornbook.* It need scarcely be added, that Poor Mailie was a real personage, though she did not actually die until some time after her last words were written. She had been purchased by Burns in a frolic, and became exceedingly attached to his person.

"Thro' all the town she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed:
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er came nigh him,
Than Mailie dead."

These little pieces are in a much broader dialect than any of their predecessors. His merriment and satire were, from the beginning, Scotch. Notwithstanding the luxurious tone of some of Burns's pieces produced in those times, we are assured by himself (and his brother unhesitatingly confirms the statement) that no positive vice mingled in any of his loves, until after he had reached his twenty-third year. He has already told us, that his short residence "away from home" at Kirkoswald's, where he mixed in the society of seafaring men and smugglers, produced an unfavourable alteration on some of his habits; but in 1781–2 he spent six months at Irvine; and it is from this period that his brother dates a serious change.

"As his numerous connexions," says Gilbert, "were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty, (from which he never deviated till his twenty-third year), he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be the case while he remained a farmer, as the stocking of a farm required a sum of money he saw no probability of being master of for a great while. He and I had for several years taken land of our father, for the purpose of raising flax on our own account; and in the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as being suitable to his grand view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax-raising." Burns, accordingly, went to a half-brother of his mother's, by name Peacock, a flax-dresser in Irvine, with the view of learning this new trade, and for some time he applied himself diligently; but misfortune after misfortune attended him. The shop accidentally caught fire during the carousal of a new-year's-day's morning, and Robert "was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence."—"I was obliged," says he, "to give up this scheme; the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and, to crown my distresses, a *belle fille* whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was, my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—*Depart from me, ye cursed.*" The following letter, addressed by Burns to his father, three days before the unfortunate fire took place, will show abundantly that the gloom of his spirits had little need of that aggravation. When we consider by whom, to whom, and under what circumstances, it was written, the letter is every way a remarkable one:—

"Honoured Sir,

"I have purposely delayed writing, in the hope that I should have the pleasure of seeing you on New-year's day; but work comes so hard upon us, that I do not choose to be absent on that account, as well as for some other little reasons, which I shall tell you at meeting. My health is nearly the same as when you were here, only my sleep is a little sounder; and, on the whole, I am rather better than otherwise, though I mend by very slow degrees. The weakness of my nerves has so debilitated my

mind, that I dare neither review past wants, nor look forward into futurity; for the least anxiety or perturbation in my breast produces most unhappy effects on my whole frame. Sometimes, indeed, when for an hour or two my spirits are alightened, I *glimmer* a little into futurity; but my principal, and indeed my only pleasurable employment, is looking backwards and forwards in a moral and religious way. I am quite transported at the thought, that ere long, perhaps very soon, I shall bid an eternal adieu to all the pains and uneasiness, and disquietudes of this weary life; for I assure you I am heartily tired of it; and, if I do not very much deceive myself, I could contentedly and gladly resign it.

> 'The soul, uneasy, and confined at home,
> Rests and expatiates in a life to come.'

"It is for this reason I am more pleased with the 15th, 16th, and 17th verses of the 7th chapter of Revelations, than with any ten times as many verses in the whole Bible, and would not exchange the noble enthusiasm with which they inspire me for all that this world has to offer. As for this world, I despair of ever making a figure in it. I am not formed for the bustle of the busy, nor the flutter of the gay. I shall never again be capable of entering into such scenes. Indeed, I am altogether unconcerned at the thoughts of this life. I foresee that poverty and obscurity probably await me, and I am in some measure prepared, and daily preparing, to meet them. I have but just time and paper to return you my grateful thanks for the lessons of virtue and piety you have given me, which were too much neglected at the time of giving them, but which I hope have been remembered ere it is yet too late. Present my dutiful respects to my mother, and my compliments to Mr. and Mrs. Muir; and, with wishing you a merry New-year's-day, I shall conclude.

"I am, honoured Sir, your dutiful son,

"ROBERT BURNS."

"P. S.—My meal is nearly out; but I am going to borrow, till I get more."

The verses of Scripture here alluded to, are as follows:—

"15. Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple; and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

"16. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

"17. For the Lamb that is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters; and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

"This letter," says Dr. Currie, "written several years before the publication of his Poems, when his name was as obscure as his condition was humble, displays the philosophic melancholy which so generally forms the poetical temperament, and that buoyant and ambitious spirit which indicates a mind conscious of its strength. At Irvine, Burns at this time possessed a single room for his lodgings, rented, perhaps, at the rate of a shilling a-week. He passed his days in constant labour as a flax-dresser, and his food consisted chiefly of oat-meal, sent to him from his father's family. The store of this humble, though wholesome nutriment, it appears, was nearly exhausted, and he was about to borrow till he should obtain a supply. Yet even in this situation, his active imagination had formed to itself pictures of eminence and distinction. His despair of making a figure in

the world, shows how ardently he wished for honourable fame; and his contempt of life, founded on this despair, is the genuine expression of a youthful and generous mind. In such a state of reflection, and of suffering, the imagination of Burns naturally passed the dark boundaries of our earthly horizon, and rested on those beautiful representations of a better world, where there is neither thirst, nor hunger, nor sorrow, and where happiness shall be in proportion to the capacity of happiness."—*Life*, p. 102.

Unhappily for himself and for the world, it was not always in the recollections of his virtuous home and the study of his Bible, that Burns sought for consolation amidst the heavy distresses which "his youth was heir to." Irvine is a small sea-port; and here, as at Kirkoswald's, the adventurous spirits of a smuggling coast, with all their jovial habits, were to be met with in abundance. "He contracted some acquaintance," says Gilbert, "of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bounds of rigid virtue, which had hitherto restrained him."

One of the most intimate companions of Burns, while he remained at Irvine, seems to have been David Sillar, to whom the *Epistle to Davie, a Brother Poet*, was subsequently addressed. Sillar was at this time a poor schoolmaster in Irvine, enjoying considerable reputation as a writer of local verses: and, according to all accounts, extremely jovial in his life and conversation.

Burns himself thus sums up the results of his residence at Irvine:—"From this adventure I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood, taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him, he had been set ashore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of every thing. . . . . His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine; and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself, where women was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor—which hitherto I had regarded with horror. *Here his friendship did me a mischief.*" Professor Walker, when preparing to write his Sketch of the Poet's life, was informed by an aged inhabitant of Irvine, that Burns's chief delight while there was in discussing religious topics, particularly in those circles which usually gather in a Scotch churchyard after service. The senior added, that Burns commonly took the high Calvinistic side in such debates; and concluded with a boast, that "the lad" was indebted to himself in a great measure for the gradual adoption of "more liberal opinions." It was during the same period, that the poet was first initiated in the mysteries of free masonry, "which was," says his brother, "his first introduction to the life of a boon companion." He was introduced to St. Mary's Lodge of Tarbolton by

John Ranken, a very dissipated man of considerable talents, to whom he afterwards indited a poetical epistle, which will be noticed in its place.

" Rhyme," Burns says, " I had given up ;" (on going to Irvine) " but meeting with Ferguson's *Scottish Poems*, I strung anew my wildly sounding lyre with emulating vigour." Neither flax-dressing nor the tavern could keep him long from his proper vocation. But it was probably this accidental meeting with Ferguson, that in a great measure finally determined the *Scottish* character of Burns's poetry; and indeed, but for the lasting sense of this obligation, and some natural sympathy with the personal misfortunes of Ferguson's life, it would be difficult to account for the very high terms in which Burns always mentions his productions.

Shortly before Burns went to Irvine, he, his brother Gilbert, and some seven or eight young men besides, all of the parish of Tarbolton, had formed themselves into a society, which they called the Bachelor's Club; and which met one evening in every month for the purposes of mutual entertainment and improvement. That their cups were but modestly filled is evident; for the rules of the club did not permit any member to spend more than threepence at a sitting. A question was announced for discussion at the close of each meeting; and at the next they came prepared to deliver their sentiments upon the subject-matter thus proposed. Burns drew up the regulations, and evidently was the principal person. He introduced his friend Sillar during his stay at Irvine, and the meetings appear to have continued as long as the family remained in Tarbolton. Of the sort of questions discussed, we may form some notion from the minute of one evening, still extant in Burns's hand-writing.—Question for Halloween, (Nov. 11), 1780.—" *Suppose a young man, bred a farmer, but without any fortune, has it in his power to marry either of two women, the one a girl of large fortune, but neither handsome in person, nor agreeable in conversation, but who can manage the household affairs of a farm well enough; the other of them a girl every way agreeable in person, conversation, and behaviour, but without any fortune: which of them shall he choose?*" Burns, as may be guessed, took the imprudent side in this discussion.

" On one solitary occasion," says he, " we resolved to meet at Tarbolton in July, on the race-night, and have a dance in honour of our society. Accordingly, we did meet, each one with a partner, and spent the evening in such innocence and merriment, such cheerfulness and good humour, that every brother will long remember it with delight." There can be no doubt that Burns would not have patronized this sober association so long, unless he had experienced at its assemblies the pleasure of a stimulated mind; and as little, that to the habit of arranging his thoughts, and expressing them in somewhat of a formal shape, thus early cultivated, we ought to attribute much of that conversational skill which, when he first mingled with the upper world, was generally considered as the most remarkable of all his personal accomplishments.—Burns's associates of the Bachelor's Club, must have been young men possessed of talents and acquirements, otherwise such minds as his and Gilbert's could not have persisted in measuring themselves against theirs; and we may believe that the periodical display of the poet's own vigour and resources, at these club-meetings, and (more frequently than his brother approved) at the Free Mason Lodges of Irvine and Tarbolton, extended his rural reputation; and, by degrees, prepared persons not immediately included in his own circle, for the extraordinary impression which his poetical efforts were ere long to create all over " the Carrick border."

David Sillar gives an account of the beginning of his own acquaintance with Burns, and introduction into this Bachelor's Club, which will always be read with much interest.—" Mr. Robert Burns was some time in the parish of Tarbolton prior to my acquaintance with him. His social disposition easily procured him acquaintance; but a certain satirical seasoning with which he and all poetical geniuses are in some degree influenced, while it set the rustic circle in a roar, was not unaccompanied with its kindred attendant, suspicious fear. I recollect hearing his neighbours observe, he had a great deal to say for himself, and that they suspected his principles. He wore the only tied hair in the parish; and in the church, his plaid, which was of a particular colour, I think fillemot, he wrapped in a particular manner round his shoulders. These surmises, and his exterior, had such a magnetical influence on my curiosity, as made me particularly solicitous of his acquaintance. Whether my acquaintance with Gilbert was casual or premeditated, I am not now certain. By him I was introduced, not only to his brother, but to the whole of that family, where, in a short time, I became a frequent, and I believe, not unwelcome visitant. After the commencement of my acquaintance with the bard, we frequently met upon Sundays at church, when, between sermons, instead of going with our friends or lasses to the inn, we often took a walk in the fields. In these walks, I have frequently been struck with his facility in addressing the fair sex; and many times, when I have been bashfully anxious how to express myself, he would have entered into conversation with them with the greatest ease and freedom; and it was generally a death-blow to our conversation, however agreeable, to meet a female acquaintance. Some of the few opportunities of a noontide walk that a country life allows her laborious sons, he spent on the banks of the river, or in the woods, in the neighbourhood of Stair, a situation peculiarly adapted to the genius of a rural bard. Some book (generally one of those mentioned in his letter to Mr. Murdoch) he always carried and read, when not otherwise employed. It was likewise his custom to read at table. In one of my visits to Lochlea, in time of a sowen supper, he was so intent on reading, I think Tristram Shandy, that his spoon falling out of his hand, made him exclaim, in a tone scarcely imitable, ' Alas, poor Yorick!' Such was Burns, and such were his associates, when, in May 1781, I was admitted a member of the Bachelor's Club."

The misfortunes of William Burnes thickened apace, as has already been seen, and were approaching their crisis at the time when Robert came home from his flax-dressing experiment at Irvine. The good old man died soon after; and among other evils which he thus escaped, was an affliction that would, in his eyes, have been severe. The poet had not, as he confesses, come unscathed out of the society of those persons of " liberal opinions" with whom he consorted in Irvine; and he expressly attributes to their lessons, the scrape into which he fell soon after " he put his hand to plough again." He was compelled, according to the then all but universal custom of rural parishes in Scotland, to do penance in church, before the congregation, in consequence of the birth of an illegitimate child; and whatever may be thought of the propriety of such exhibitions, there can be no difference of opinion as to the culpable levity with which he describes the nature of his offence, and the still more reprehensible bitterness with which, in his Epistle to Ranken, he inveighs against the clergyman, who, in rebuking him, only performed what was

then a regular part of the clerical duty, and a part of it that could never have been at all agreeable to the worthy man whom he satirizes under the appellation of "Daddie Auld." *The Poet's Welcome to an Illegitimate Child* was composed on the same occasion—a piece in which some very manly feelings are expressed, along with others which can give no one pleasure to contemplate. There is a song in honour of the same occasion, or a similar one about the same period, *The rantin' Dog the Daddie o't*,—which exhibits the poet as glorying, and only glorying in his shame.

When I consider his tender affection for the surviving members of his own family, and the reverence with which he ever regarded the memory of the father whom he had so recently buried, I cannot believe that Burns has thought fit to record in verse all the feelings which this exposure excited in his bosom. "To wave (in his own language) the quantum of the sin," he who, two years afterwards, wrote *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, had not, we may be sure, hardened his heart to the thought of bringing additional sorrow and unexpected shame to the fireside of a widowed mother. But his false pride recoiled from letting his jovial associates guess how little he was able to drown the whispers *of the still small voice;* and the fermenting bitterness of a mind ill at ease within itself, escaped (as may be too often traced in the history of satirists) in the shape of angry sarcasms against others, who, whatever their private errors might be, had at least done him no wrong.

It is impossible not to smile at one item of consolation which Burns proposes to himself on this occasion :—

> "—— The mair they talk, *I'm kend the better;*
> E'en let them clash!"

This is indeed a singular manifestation of "the last infirmity of noble minds."

CHAPTER III.

CONTENTS.—*The Brothers, Robert and Gilbert, become tenants of Mossgiel—Their incessant labour and moderate habits—The farm cold and unfertile—Not prosperous—The Muse anti-calvinistical—The poet thence involved deeply in local polemics, and charged with heresy—Curious account of these disputes—Early poems prompted by them—Origin of and remarks upon the poet's principal pieces—Love leads him far astray—A crisis—The jail or the West Indies—The alternative.*

" The star that rules my luckless lot
Has fated me the russet coat,
And damn'd my fortune to the groat;
But in requit,
Has bless'd me wi' a random shot
O' country wit."

THREE months before the death of William Burnes, Robert and Gilbert took the farm of Mossgiel, in the neighbouring parish of Mauchline, with the view of providing a shelter for their parents, in the storm which they had seen gradually thickening, and knew must soon burst; and to this place the whole family removed on William's death. The farm consisted of 119 acres, and the rent was £90. " It was stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family, (says Gilbert), and was a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed on the farm. My brother's allowance and mine was £7 per annum each; and during the whole time this family concern lasted, which was four years, as well as during the preceding period at Lochlea, Robert's expenses never, in any one year, exceeded his slender income."

" I entered on this farm," says the poet, " with a full resolution, *come, go, I will be wise.* I read farming books, I calculated crops, I attended markets; and, in short, in spite of the *devil, and the world, and the flesh,* I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, *like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.*"

" At the time that our poet took the resolution of becoming *wise,* he procured," says Gilbert, " a little book of blank paper, with the purpose, expressed on the first page, of making farming memorandums. These *farming memorandums* are curious enough," Gilbert slyly adds, " and a specimen may gratify the reader."—Specimens accordingly he gives; as,

" O why the deuce should I repine,
And be an ill foreboder?
I'm twenty-three, and five foot nine,—
I'll go and be a sodger," &c.

" O leave novells, ye Mauchline belles,
Ye're safer at your spinning wheel;
Such witching books are baited hooks
For rakish rooks—like Rob Mossgiel.
Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,
They make your youthful fancies reel,
They heat your veins, and fire your brains,
And then ye're prey for Rob Mossgiel," &c. &c.

The four years during which Burns resided on this cold and ungrateful farm of Mossgiel, were the most important of his life. It was then that his genius developed its highest energies; on the works produced in these years his fame was first established, and must ever continue mainly to rest: it was then also that his personal character came out in all its brightest lights, and in all but its darkest shadows; and indeed from the commencement of this period, the history of the man may be traced, step by step, in his own immortal writings. Burns now began to know that nature had meant him for a poet; and diligently, though as yet in secret, he laboured in what he felt to be his destined vocation. Gilbert continued for some time to be his chief, often indeed his only confidant; and any thing more interesting and delightful than this excellent man's account of the manner in which the poems included in the first of his brother's publications were composed, is certainly not to be found in the annals of literary history.

The reader has already seen, that long before the earliest of them was known beyond the domestic circle, the strength of Burns's understanding, and the keenness of his wit, as displayed in his ordinary conversation, and more particularly at masonic meetings and debating clubs, (of which he formed one in Mauchline, on the Tarbolton model, immediately on his removal to Mossgiel), had made his name known to some considerable extent in the country about Tarbolton, Mauchline, and Irvine; and this prepared the way for his poetry. Professor Walker gives an anecdote on this head, which must not be omitted. Burns already numbered several clergymen among his acquaintances. One of these gentlemen told the Professor, that after entering on the clerical profession, he had repeatedly met Burns in company, " where," said he, " the acuteness and originality displayed by him, the depth of his discernment, the force of his expressions, and the authoritative energy of his understanding, had created a sense of his power, of the extent of which I was unconscious, till it was revealed to me by accident. On the occasion of my second appearance in the pulpit, I came with an assured and tranquil mind, and though a few persons of education were present, advanced some length in the service with my confidence and self-possession unimpaired; but when I saw Burns, who was of a different parish, unexpectedly enter the church, I was affected with a tremor and embarrassment, which suddenly apprised me of the impression which my mind, unknown to itself, had previously received." The Professor adds, that the person who had thus unconsciously been measuring the stature of the intellectual giant, was not only a man of good talents and education, but " remarkable for a more than ordinary portion of constitutional firmness."

Every Scotch peasant who makes any pretension to understanding, is a theological critic—and Burns, no doubt, had long ere this time distinguished himself considerably among those hard-headed groups that may usually be seen gathered together in the church-yard after the sermon is over. It may be guessed that from the time of his residence at Irvine, his stric-

tures were too often delivered in no reverend vein. "Polemical divinity," says he to Dr. Moore, in 1787, "about this time, was putting the country half mad, and I, ambitious of shining in conversation-parties on Sundays, at funerals, &c., used to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue-and-cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour."

To understand Burns's situation at this time, at once patronized by a number of clergymen, and attended with "a hue-and-cry of heresy," we must remember his own words, "that polemical divinity was putting the country half mad." Of both the two parties which, ever since the revolution of 1688, have pretty equally divided the Church of Scotland, it so happened that some of the most zealous and conspicuous leaders and partizans were thus opposed to each other, in constant warfare, in this particular district; and their feuds being of course taken up among their congregations, and spleen and prejudice at work, even more furiously in the cottage than in *the manse*, he who, to the annoyance of the one set of belligerents, could talk like Burns, might count pretty surely, with whatever alloy his wit happened to be mingled, on the applause and countenance of the enemy. And it is needless to add, they were the less scrupulous sect of the two that enjoyed the co-operation, such as it was then, and far more important, as in the sequel it came to be, of our poet.

William Burnes, as we have already seen, though a most exemplary and devout man, entertained opinions very different from those which commonly obtained among the rigid Calvanists of his district. The worthy and pious old man himself, therefore, had not improbably infused into his son's mind its first prejudice against these persons. The jovial spirits with whom Burns associated at Irvine, and afterwards, were of course habitual deriders of the manners, as well as the tenets of the

"Orthodox, orthodox, wha believe in John Knox."

We have already observed the effect of the young poet's own first collision with the ruling powers of presbyterian discipline; but it was in the very act of settling at Mossgiel that Burns formed the connexion, which, more than any circumstance besides, influenced him as to the matter now in question. The farm belonged to the estate of the Earl of Loudoun, but the brothers held it on a sub-lease from Mr. Gavin Hamilton, writer (*i. e.* attorney) in Mauchline, a man, by every account, of engaging manners, open, kind, generous, and high-spirited, between whom and Robert Burns, a close and intimate friendship was ere long formed. Just about this time it happened that Hamilton was at open feud with Mr. Auld, the minister of Mauchline, (the same who had already *rebuked* the poet), and the ruling elders of the parish, in consequence of certain irregularities in his personal conduct and deportment, which, according to the usual strict notions of kirk discipline, were considered as fairly demanding the vigorous interference of these authorities. The notice of this person, his own landlord, and, as it would seem, one of the principal inhabitants of the village of Mauchline at the time, must, of course, have been very flattering to our polemical young farmer. He espoused Gavin Hamilton's quarrel warmly. Hamilton was naturally enough disposed to mix up his personal affair with the standing controversies whereon Auld was at variance with a large and powerful body of his brother clergymen; and by degrees Mr. Hamilton's ardent *protegé* came to be as vehemently interested in the church politics of Ayrshire,

as he could have been in politics of another order, had he happened to be a freeman of some open borough, and his patron a candidate for the honour of representing it in St. Stephen's. Mr. Cromek has been severely criticised for some details of Mr. Gavin Hamilton's dissensions with his parish minister; but perhaps it might have been well to limit the censure to the tone and spirit of the narrative, since there is no doubt that these petty squabbles had a large share in directing the early energies of Burns's poetical talents. Even in the west of Scotland, such matters would hardly excite much notice now-a-days, but they were quite enough to produce a world of vexation and controversy forty years ago; and the English reader to whom all such details are denied, will certainly never be able to comprehend either the merits or the demerits of many of Burns's most remarkable productions. Since I have touched on this matter at all, I may as well add, that Hamilton's family, though professedly adhering to the Presbyterian Establishment, had always lain under a strong suspicion of Episcopalianism. Gavin's grandfather had been curate of Kirkoswald in the troubled times that preceded the Revolution, and incurred great and lasting popular hatred, in consequence of being supposed to have had a principal hand in bringing a thousand of *the Highland host* into that region in 1677-8. The district was commonly said not to have entirely recovered the effects of that savage visitation in less than a hundred years; and the descendants and representatives of the Covenanters, whom the curate of Kirkoswald had the reputation at least of persecuting, were commonly supposed to regard with any thing rather than ready good-will, his grandson, the witty writer of Mauchline. A well-nursed prejudice of this kind was likely enough to be met by counter-spleen, and such seems to have been the truth of the case. The lapse of another generation has sufficed to wipe out every trace of feuds, that were still abundantly discernible, in the days when Ayrshire first began to ring with the equally zealous applause and vituperation of,—

"Poet Burns,
And his priest-skelping turns."

It is impossible to look back now to the civil war, which then raged among the churchmen of the west of Scotland, without confessing, that on either side there was much to regret, and not a little to blame. Proud and haughty spirits were unfortunately opposed to each other; and in the superabundant display of zeal as to doctrinal points, neither party seems to have mingled much of the charity of the Christian temper. The whole exhibition was unlovely—the spectacle of such indecent violence among the leading Ecclesiastics of the district, acted most unfavourably on many men's minds—and no one can doubt that in the unsettled state of Robert Burns's principles, the effect must have been powerful as to him.

Macgill and Dalrymple, the two ministers of the town of Ayr, had long been suspected of entertaining heterodox opinions on several points, particularly the doctrine of original sin, and even of the Trinity; and the former at length published an Essay, which was considered as demanding the notice of the Church-courts. More than a year was spent in the discussions which arose out of this; and at last Dr. Macgill was fain to acknowledge his errors, and promise that he would take an early opportunity of apologizing for them to his own congregation from the pulpit—which promise, however, he never performed. The gentry of the country took,

for the most part, the side of Macgill, who was a man of cold unpopular manners, but of unreproached moral character, and possessed of some accomplishments, though certainly not of distinguished talents. The bulk of the lower orders espoused, with far more fervid zeal, the cause of those who conducted the prosecution against this erring doctor. Gavin Hamilton, and all persons of his stamp, were of course on the side of Macgill—Auld, and the Mauchline elders, were his enemies. Mr. Robert Aiken, a writer in Ayr, a man of remarkable talents, particularly in public speaking, had the principal management of Macgill's cause before the Presbytery, and, I believe, also before the Synod. He was an intimate friend of Hamilton, and through him had about this time formed an acquaintance, which soon ripened into a warm friendship, with Burns. Burns, therefore, was from the beginning a zealous, as in the end he was perhaps the most effective partizan, of the side on which Aiken had staked so much of his reputation. Macgill, Dalrymple, and their brethren, suspected, with more or less justice, of leaning to heterodox opinions, are the *New Light* pastors of his earliest satires. The prominent antagonists of these men, and chosen champions of the *Auld Light*, in Ayrshire, it must now be admitted on all hands, presented, in many particulars of personal conduct and demeanour, as broad a mark as ever tempted the shafts of a satirist. These men prided themselves on being the legitimate and undegenerate descendants and representatives of the haughty Puritans, who chiefly conducted the overthrow of Popery in Scotland, and who ruled for a time, and would fain have continued to rule, over both king and people, with a more tyrannical dominion than ever the Catholic priesthood itself had been able to exercise amidst that high-spirited nation. With the horrors of the Papal system for ever in their mouths, these men were in fact as bigoted monks, and almost as relentless inquisitors in their hearts, as ever wore cowl and cord—austere and ungracious of aspect, coarse and repulsive of address and manners—very Pharisees as to the lesser matters of the law, and many of them, to all outward appearance at least, overflowing with pharisaical self-conceit, as well as monastic bile. That admirable qualities lay concealed under this ungainly exterior, and mingled with and checked the worst of these gloomy passions, no candid man will permit himself to doubt or suspect for a moment; and that Burns has grossly overcharged his portraits of them, deepening shadows that were of themselves sufficiently dark, and excluding altogether those brighter, and perhaps softer, traits of character, which redeemed the originals within the sympathies of many of the worthiest and best of men, seems equally clear. Their bitterest enemies dared not at least to bring against them, even when the feud was at its height of fervour, charges of that heinous sort, which they fearlessly, and I fear justly, preferred against their antagonists. No one ever accused them of signing the Articles, administering the sacraments, and eating the bread of a Church, whose fundamental doctrines they disbelieved, and, by insinuation at least, disavowed.

The law of Church-patronage was another subject on which controversy ran high and furious in the district at the same period; the actual condition of things on this head being upheld by all the men of the New Light, and condemned as equally at variance with the precepts of the gospel, and the rights of freemen, by not a few of the other party, and, in particular, by certain conspicuous zealots in the immediate neighbourhood of Burns. While this warfare raged, there broke out an intestine discord within the

camp of the faction which he loved not. Two of the foremost leaders of the Auld Light party quarrelled about a question of parish-boundaries; the matter was taken up in the Presbytery of Kilmarnock, and there, in the open court, to which the announcement of the discussion had drawn a multitude of the country people, and Burns among the rest, the reverend divines, hitherto sworn friends and associates, lost all command of temper, and abused each other *coram populo*, with a fiery virulence of personal invective, such as has long been banished from all popular assemblies, wherein the laws of courtesy are enforced by those of a certain unwritten code.

"The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light," says Burns, "was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my *Holy Fair*. I had a notion myself, that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with *a roar of applause*." This was *The Holy Tuilzie*, or *Twa Herds*. The two *herds*, or pastors, were Mr. Moodie, minister of Riccartoun, and that favourite victim of Burns's, John Russell, then minister of Kilmarnock, and afterwards of Stirling.—"From this time," Burns says, "I began to be known in the country as a maker of rhymes. . . . . *Holy Willie's Prayer* next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, and see if any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers.——Burns's reverend editor, Mr. Paul, presents *Holy Willie's Prayer* at full length, although not inserted in Dr. Currie's edition, and calls on the friends of religion to bless the memory of the poet who took such a judicious method of "leading the liberal mind to a rational view of the nature of prayer."—"This," says that bold commentator, "was not only the prayer of Holy Willie, but it is merely the metrical version of every prayer that is offered up by those who call themselves the pure reformed church of Scotland. In the course of his reading and polemical warfare, Burns embraced and defended the opinions of Taylor of Norwich, Macgill, and that school of Divines. He could not reconcile his mind to that picture of the Being, whose very essence is love, which is drawn by the high Calvinists or the representatives of the Covenanters—namely, that he is disposed to grant salvation to none but a few of their sect; that the whole Pagan world, the disciples of Mahomet, the Roman Catholics, the Lutherans, and even the Calvinists who differ from them in certain tenets, must, like Korah, Dathan and Abiram, descend to the pit of perdition, man, woman, and child, without the possibility of escape; but such are the identical doctrines of the Cameronians of the present day, and such was Holy Willie's style of prayer. The hypocrisy and dishonesty of the man, who was at the time a reputed Saint, were perceived by the discerning penetration of Burns, and to expose them he considered his duty. The terrible view of the Deity exhibited in that able production is precisely the same view which is given of him, in different words, by many devout preachers at present. They inculcate, that the greatest sinner is the greatest favourite of heaven—that a reformed bawd is more acceptable to the Almighty than a pure virgin, who has hardly ever transgressed even in thought—that the lost sheep alone will be saved, and that the ninety-and-nine out of the hundred will be left in the wilderness, to perish without mercy—that the Saviour of the world loves

the elect, not from any lovely qualities which they possess, for they are hateful in his sight, but "he loves them because he loves them." Such are the sentiments which are breathed by those who are denominated High Calvinists, and from which the soul of a poet who loves mankind, and who has not studied the system in all its bearings, recoils with horror. . . . The gloomy forbidding representation which they give of the Supreme Being, has a tendency to produce insanity, and lead to suicide." *

This Reverend author may be considered as expressing in the above, and in other passages of a similar tendency, the sentiments with which even the most audacious of Burns's anti-calvinistic satires were received among the Ayrshire divines of the New Light; that performances so blasphemous should have been, not only pardoned, but applauded by ministers of religion, is a singular circumstance, which may go far to make the reader comprehend the exaggerated state of party feeling in Burns's native county, at the period when he first appealed to the public ear: nor is it fair to pronounce sentence upon the young and reckless satirist, without taking into consideration the undeniable fact—that in his worst offences of this kind, he was encouraged and abetted by those, who, to say nothing more about their professional character and authority, were almost the only persons of liberal education whose society he had any opportunity of approaching at the period in question. Had Burns received, at this time, from his clerical friends and patrons, such advice as was tendered, when rather too late, by a layman who was as far from bigotry on religious subjects as any man in the world, this great genius might have made his first approaches to the public notice in a very different character.—"Let your bright talents,"—(thus wrote the excellent John Ramsay of Ochtertyre, in October 1787),—"Let those bright talents which the Almighty has bestowed on you, be henceforth employed to the noble purpose of supporting the cause of truth and virtue. An imagination so varied and forcible as yours, may do this in many different modes; nor is it necessary to be always serious, which you have been to good purpose; good morals may be recommended in a comedy, or even in a song. Great allowances are due to the heat and inexperience of youth;—and few poets can boast, like Thomson, of never having written a line, which, dying, they would wish to blot. In particular, I wish you to keep clear of the thorny walks of satire, which makes a man an hundred enemies for one friend, and is doubly dangerous when one is supposed to extend the slips and weaknesses of individuals to their sect or party. About modes of faith, serious and excellent men have always differed; and there are certain curious questions, which may afford scope to men of metaphysical heads, but seldom mend the heart or temper. Whilst these points are beyond human ken, it is sufficient that all our sects concur in their views of morals. You will forgive me for these hints."

It is amusing to observe how soon even really *Bucolic* bards learn the tricks of their trade: Burns knew already what lustre a compliment gains from being set in sarcasm, when he made Willie call for special notice of

——"Gaun Hamilton's deserts, ...
He drinks, and swears, and plays at carts;
Yet has sae mony taken' arts
Wi' great and sma',
Frae God's ain priests the people's hearts
He steals awa," &c.

* The Rev. Hamilton Paul's Life of Burns, pp. 40, 41.

Nor is his other patron, Aiken, introduced with inferior skill, as having merited Willie's most fervent execration by his "glib-tongued" defence of the heterodox doctor of Ayr:

> "Lord! visit them wha did employ him,
> And for thy people's sake destroy 'em."

Burns owed a compliment to this gentleman for a well-timed exercise of his elocutionary talents. "I never knew there was any merit in my poems," said he, "until Mr. Aitken *read them* into repute."

Encouraged by the "roar of applause" which greeted these pieces, thus orally promulgated and recommended, he produced in succession various satires wherein the same set of persons were lashed; as *The Ordination; The Kirk's Alarm*, &c. &c.; and last, and best undoubtedly, *The Holy Fair*, in which, unlike the others that have been mentioned, satire keeps its own place, and is subservient to the poetry of Burns. This was, indeed, an extraordinary performance; no partizan of any sect could whisper that malice had formed its principal inspiration, or that its chief attraction lay in the boldness with which individuals, entitled and accustomed to respect, were held up to ridicule: it was acknowledged amidst the sternest mutterings of wrath, that national manners were once more in the hands of a national poet. *The Holy Fair*, however, created admiration, not surprise, among the circle of domestic friends who had been admitted to watch the steps of his progress in an art of which, beyond that circle, little or nothing was heard until the youthful poet produced at length a satirical master-piece. It is not possible to reconcile the statements of Gilbert and others, as to some of the minutiæ of the chronological history of Burns's previous performances; but there can be no doubt, that although from choice or accident, his first provincial fame was that of a satirist, he had, some time before any of his philippics on the Auld Light Divines made their appearance, exhibited to those who enjoyed his personal confidence, a range of imaginative power hardly inferior to what the *Holy Fair* itself displays; and, at least, such a rapidly improving skill in poetical language and versification, as must have prepared them for witnessing, without wonder, even the most perfect specimens of his art. Gilbert says, that "among *the earliest* of his poems," was the *Epistle to Davie*, (*i. e.* Mr. David Sillar), and Mr. Walker believes that this was written very soon after the death of William Burnes. This piece is in the very intricate and difficult measure of the Cherry and the Slae; and, on the whole, the poet moves with ease and grace in his very unnecessary trammels; but young poets are careless beforehand of difficulties which would startle the experienced; and great poets may overcome any difficulties if they once grapple with them; so that I should rather ground my distrust of Gilbert's statement, if it must be literally taken, on the celebration of *Jean*, with which the epistle terminates: and, after all, she is celebrated in the concluding stanzas, which may have been added some time after the first draught. The gloomy circumstances of the poet's personal condition, as described in this piece, were common, it cannot be doubted, to all the years of his youthful history; so that no particular date is to be founded upon these; and if this was the first, certainly it was not the last occasion, on which Burns exercised his fancy in the colouring of the very worst issue that could attend a life of unsuccessful toil. But Gilbert's recollections, however on trivial points inaccurate, will always be more interesting than any thing that could

be put in their place. "Robert," says he, "often composed without any regular plan. When any thing made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it to poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in summer 1784, when in the interval of harder labour, he and I were weeding in the garden (kail-yard), that he repeated to me the principal part of his epistle (to Davie). I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scotch poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression—but here, there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging. Robert seemed very well pleased with my criticism, and he talked of sending it to some magazine; but as this plan afforded no opportunity of knowing how it would take, the idea was dropped. It was, I think, in the winter following, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family, (and I could yet point out the particular spot), that the author first repeated to me the *Address to the Deil.* The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him, by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have, from various quarters, of this august personage. *Death and Doctor Hornbook*, though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1785. The schoolmaster of Tarbolton parish, to eke up the scanty subssitence allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised, that "Advice would be given in common disorders at the shop gratis." Robert was at a mason-meeting in Tarbolton, when the *Dominie* unfortunately made too ostentatious a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparitions, he mentions in his letter to Dr. Moore, crossed his mind; this set him to work for the rest of the way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me. The *Epistle to John Lapraik* was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem, *On Fasten-e'en we had a rockin'*. I believe he has omitted the word *rocking* in the glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times, when the country-women employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock or distaff. This simple implement is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of *going a-rocking*, or *with the rock.* As the connexion the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the rock

gave place to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women. It was at one of these *rockings* at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their *rocks*, that Lapraik's song, beginning—"When I upon thy bosom lean," was sung, and we were informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first epistle to Lapraik; and his second in reply to his answer. The verses to the *Mouse* and *Mountain Daisy* were composed on the occasions mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough; I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise. Several of the poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me, that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy, *Man was made to Mourn*, was composed. Robert had frequently remarked to me, that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, "Let us worship God," used by a decent sober head of a family introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for *The Cottar's Saturday Night*. The hint of the plan, and title of the poem, were taken from Ferguson's *Farmer's Ingle*. When Robert had not some pleasure in view, in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together, when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons, (those precious breathing-times to the labouring part of the community), and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat *The Cottar's Saturday Night*. I do not recollect to have read or heard any thing by which I was more highly *electrified*. The fifth and six stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstacy through my soul."

The poems mentioned by Gilbert Burns in the above extract, are among the most popular of his brother's performances; and there may be a time for recurring to some of their peculiar merits as works of art. It may be mentioned here, that John Wilson, alias Dr. Hornbook, was not merely compelled to shut up shop as an apothecary, or druggist rather, by the satire which bears his name; but so irresistible was the tide of ridicule, that his pupils, one by one, deserted him, and he abandoned his schoolcraft also. Removing to Glasgow, and turning himself successfully to commercial pursuits, Dr. Hornbook survived the local storm which he could not effectually withstand, and was often heard in his latter days, when waxing cheerful and communicative over a bowl of punch, "in the Saltmarket," to bless the lucky hour in which the dominie of Tarbolton provoked the castigation of Robert Burns. In those days the Scotch universities did not turn out doctors of physic by the hundred; Mr. Wilson's was probably the only medicine-chest from which salts and senna were distributed for the benefit of a considerable circuit of parishes; and his advice, to say the least of the matter, was perhaps as good as could be had, for love or money, among the wise women who were the only rivals of his practice. The poem which drove him from Ayrshire was not, we may believe, either expected or designed to produce any such serious effect. Poor Hornbook and the poet were old acquaintances, and in some sort rival wits at the time in the mason lodge.

In *Man was made to Mourn*, whatever might be the casual idea that set the poet to work, it is but too evident, that he wrote from the habitual feelings of his own bosom. The indignation with which he through life contemplated the inequality of human condition, and particularly, the contrast between his own worldly circumstances and intellectual rank, was never more bitterly, nor more loftily expressed, than in some of those stanzas:—

"See yonder poor o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil.
And see his lordly fellow worm
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By Nature's laws design'd—
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty and scorn,
Or why has man the will and power
To make his fellow mourn?"

"I had an old grand-uncle," says the poet, in one of his letters to Mrs. Dunlop, "with whom my mother lived in her girlish years; the good old man, for such he was, was blind long ere he died; during which time his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of *The Life and Age of Man*."

In *Man was made to Mourn*, Burns appears to have taken many hints from this ancient ballad, which begins thus:

"Upon the sixteen hundred year of God, and fifty-three,
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear, as writings testifie;
On January, the sixteenth day, as I did lie alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say—Ah! man is made to moan!"*

The Cottar's Saturday Night is, perhaps, of all Burns's pieces, the one whose exclusion from the collection, were such things possible now-a-days, would be the most injurious, if not to the genius, at least to the character, of the man. In spite of many feeble lines, and some heavy stanzas, it appears to me, that even his genius would suffer more in estimation, by being contemplated in the absence of this poem, than of any other single performance he has left us. Loftier flights he certainly has made, but in these he remained but a short while on the wing, and effort is too often perceptible; here the motion is easy, gentle, placidly undulating. There is more of the conscious security of power, than in any other of his serious pieces of considerable length; the whole has the appearance of coming in a full stream from the fountain of the heart—a stream that soothes the ear, and has no glare on the surface.

It is delightful to turn from any of the pieces which present so great a genius as writhing under an inevitable burden, to this, where his buoyant energy seems not even to feel the pressure. The miseries of toil and penury, who shall affect to treat as unreal? Yet they shrunk to small dimensions in the presence of a spirit thus exalted at once, and softened, by the pieties of virgin love, filial reverence, and domestic devotion.

* Cromek's Scottish Songs.

The *Cottar's Saturday Night* and the *Holy Fair* have been put in contrast, and much marvel made that they should have sprung from the same source. " The annual celebration of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper in the rural parishes of Scotland, has much in it," says the unfortunate Heron, " of those old popish festivals, in which superstition, traffic, and amusement, used to be strangely intermingled. Burns saw and seized in it one of the happiest of all subjects to afford scope for the display of that strong and piercing sagacity, by which he could almost intuitively distinguish the reasonable from the absurd, and the becoming from the ridiculous; of that picturesque power of fancy which enabled him to represent scenes, and persons, and groups, and looks, and attitudes, and gestures, in a manner almost as lively and impressive, even in words, as if all the artifices and energies of the pencil had been employed; of that knowledge which he had necessarily acquired of the manners, passions, and prejudices of the rustics around him—of whatever was ridiculous, no less than whatever was affectingly beautiful in rural life." This is very good, but who ever disputed the exquisite graphic truth of the poem to which the critic refers? The question remains as it stood; is there then nothing besides a strange mixture of superstition, traffic, and amusement, in the scene which such an annual celebration in a rural parish of Scotland presents? Does nothing of what is " affectingly beautiful in rural life," make a part in the original which was before the poet's eyes? Were " Superstition," " Hypocrisy," and " Fun," the only influences which he might justly have impersonated? It would be hard, I think, to speak so even of the old popish festivals to which Mr. Heron alludes; it would be hard, surely, to say it of any festival in which, mingled as they may be with sanctimonious pretenders, and surrounded with giddy groups of onlookers, a mighty multitude of devout men are assembled for the worship of God, beneath the open heaven, and above the tombs of their fathers.

Let us beware, however, of pushing our censure of a young poet, mad with the inspiration of the moment, from whatever source derived, too far. It can hardly be doubted that the author of *The Cottar's Saturday Night* had felt, in his time, all that any man can feel in the contemplation of the most sublime of the religious observances of his country; and as little, that had he taken up the subject of this rural sacrament in a solemn mood, he might have produced a piece as gravely beautiful, as his *Holy Fair* is quaint, graphic, and picturesque. A scene of family worship, on the other hand, I can easily imagine to have come from his hand as pregnant with the ludicrous as that Holy Fair itself. The family prayers of the Saturday's night, and the rural celebration of the Eucharist, are parts of the same system—the system which has made the people of Scotland what they are—and what, it is to be hoped, they will continue to be. And when men ask of themselves what this great national poet really thought of a system in which minds immeasurably inferior to his can see so much to venerate, it is surely just that they should pay most attention to what he has delivered under the gravest sanction.

The Reverend Hamilton Paul does not desert his post on occasion of *The Holy Fair;* he defends that piece as manfully as *Holy Willie;* and, indeed, expressly applauds Burns for having endeavoured to explode " abuses discountenanced by the General Assembly." *Hallowe'en,* a descriptive poem, perhaps even more exquisitely wrought than the *Holy Fair,* and containing nothing that could offend the feelings of anybody, was pro-

duced about the same period. Burns's art had now reached its climax; but it is time that we should revert more particularly to the personal history of the poet.

He seems to have very soon perceived, that the farm of Mossgiel could at the best furnish no more than the bare means of existence to so large a family; and wearied with "the prospects drear," from which he only escaped in occasional intervals of social merriment, or when gay flashes of solitary fancy, for they were no more, threw sunshine on every thing, he very naturally took up the notion of quitting Scotland for a time, and trying his fortune in the West Indies, where, as is well known, the managers of the plantations are, in the great majority of cases, Scotchmen of Burns's own rank and condition. His letters show, that on two or three different occasions, long before his poetry had excited any attention, he had applied for, and nearly obtained appointments of this sort, through the intervention of his acquaintances in the sea-port of Irvine. Petty accidents, not worth describing, interfered to disappoint him from time to time; but at last a new burst of misfortune rendered him doubly anxious to escape from his native land; and but for an accident, his arrangements would certainly have been completed. But we must not come quite so rapidly to the last of his Ayrshire love-stories. How many lesser romances of this order were evolved and completed during his residence at Mossgiel, it is needless to inquire; that they were many, his songs prove, for in those days he wrote no love-songs on imaginary Heroines. *Mary Morison*—*Behind yon hills where Stinchar flows*—*On Cessnock bank there lives a lass*—belong to this period; and there are three or four inspired by Mary Campbell—the object of by far the deepest passion that ever Burns knew, and which he has accordingly immortalized in the noblest of his elegiacs. In introducing to Mr. Thomson's notice the song,—

> "Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
> And leave auld Scotia's shore?—
> Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
> Across the Atlantic's roar?"

Burns says, "In my early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took this farewell of a dear girl;" afterwards, in a note on—

> "Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
> The Castel o' Montgomerie;
> Green be your woods, and fair your flowers,
> Your waters never drumlie."

he adds,—"After a pretty long trial of the most ardent reciprocal affection, we met by appointment on the second Sunday of May, in a sequestered spot by the banks of Ayr, where we spent a day in taking a farwell before she should embark for the West Highlands, to arrange matters among her friends for our projected change of life. At the close of the autumn following she crossed the sea to meet me at Greenock, where she had scarce landed when she was seized with a malignant fever, which hurried my dear girl to her grave in a few days, before I could even hear of her illness;" and Mr. Cromek, speaking of the same "day of parting love," gives some further particulars. "This adieu," says that zealous inquirer into the details of Burns's story, "was performed with all those simple and striking ceremonials, which rustic sentiment has devised to prolong tender emotions,

and to impose awe. The lovers stood on each side of a small purling brook —they laved their hands in the limpid stream—and, holding a Bible between them, pronounced their vows to be faithful to each other. They parted—never to meet again." It is proper to add, that Mr. Cromek's story has recently been confirmed very strongly by the accidental discovery of a Bible presented by Burns to *Mary Campbell*, in the possession of her still surviving sister at Ardrossan. Upon the boards of the first volume is inscribed, in Burns's hand-writing,—"And ye shall not swear by my name falsely—I am the Lord."—Levit. chap. xix. v. 12. On the second volume, —"Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the Lord thine oath."—St. Matth. chap. v., v. 33. And, on a blank leaf of either,—"Robert Burns, Mossgiel." How lasting was the poet's remembrance of this pure love, and its tragic termination, will be seen hereafter. Highland Mary seems to have died ere her lover had made any of his more serious attempts in poetry. In the Epistle to Mr. Sillar, (as we have already hinted), the very earliest, according to Gilbert, of these attempts, the poet celebrates "his Davie and his *Jean*." This was Jean Armour, a young woman, a step, if any thing, above Burns's own rank in life, the daughter of a respectable man, a master-mason, in the village of Mauchline, where she was at the time the reigning toast, and who still survives, as the respected widow of our poet. There are numberless allusions to her maiden charms in the best pieces which he produced at Mossgiel; amongst others is the six Belles of Mauchline, at the head of whom she is placed.

"In Mauchline there dwells six proper young belles,
The pride of the place and its neighbourhood a';
Their carriage and dress, a stranger would guess,
In Lon'on or Paris they'd gotten it a':

"Miss Millar is fine, Miss Markland's divine,
Miss Smith she has wit, and Miss Betty is braw;
There's beauty and fortune to get wi' Miss Morton,
But Armour's the jewel for me o' them a'."

The time is not yet come, in which all the details of this story can be expected. Jean Armour found herself pregnant.

Burns's worldly circumstances were in a most miserable state when he was informed of Miss Armour's condition; and the first announcement of it staggered him like a blow. He saw nothing for it but to fly the country at once; and, in a note to James Smith of Mauchline, the confidant of his amour, he thus wrote:—"Against two things I am fixed as fate—staying at home, and owning her conjugally. The first, by Heaven, I will not do! —the last, by hell, I will never do!—A good God bless you, and make you happy, up to the warmest weeping wish of parting friendship..... If you see Jean, tell her I will meet her, so help me God, in my hour of need." The lovers met accordingly; and the result of the meeting was what was to be anticipated from the tenderness and the manliness of Burns's feelings. All dread of personal inconvenience yielded at once to the tears of the woman he loved, and, ere they parted, he gave into her keeping a written acknowledgment of marriage. This, under the circumstances, and produced by a person in Miss Armour's condition, according to the Scots law, was to be accepted as legal evidence of an *irregular* marriage having really taken place; it being of course understood that the marriage was to be formally avowed as soon as the consequences of their imprudence could no longer be concealed from her family. The disclosure was deferred to

the last moment, and it was received by the father of Miss Armour with equal surprise and anger. Burns, confessing himself to be unequal to the maintenance of a family, proposed to go immediately to Jamaica, where he hoped to find better fortunes. He offered, if this were rejected, to abandon his farm, which was by this time a hopeless concern, and earn bread, at least for his wife and children, by his labour at home; but nothing could appease the indignation of Armour. By what arguments he prevailed on his daughter to take so strange and so painful a step we know not; but the fact is certain, that, at his urgent entreaty, she destroyed the document.

It was under such extraordinary circumstances that Miss Armour became the mother of twins.—Burns's love and pride, the two most powerful feelings of his mind, had been equally wounded. His anger and grief together drove him, according to every account, to the verge of absolute insanity; and some of his letters on this occasion, both published and unpublished, have certainly all the appearance of having been written in as deep a concentration of despair as ever preceded the most awful of human calamities. His first thought had been, as we have seen, to fly at once from the scene of his disgrace and misery; and this course seemed now to be absolutely necessary. He was summoned to find security for the maintenance of the children whom he was prevented from legitimating; but the man who had in his desk the immortal poems to which we have been referring above, either disdained to ask, or tried in vain to find, pecuniary assistance in his hour of need; and the only alternative that presented itself to his view was America or a jail.

CHAPTER IV.

CONTENTS.—*The Poet gives up Mossgiel to his Brother Gilbert—Intends for Jamaica—Subscription Edition of his Poems suggested to supply means of outfit—One of* 600 *copies printed at Kilmarnock,* 1786—*It brings him extended reputation, and* £20—*Also many very kind friends, but no patron—In these circumstances, Guaging first hinted to him by his early friends, Hamilton and Aiken—Sayings and doings in the first year of his fame—Jamaica again in view—Plan desisted from because of encouragement by Dr. Blacklock to publish at Edinburgh, wherein the Poet sojourns.*

"He saw misfortune's cauld *nor'-west*,
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a birth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea."

JAMAICA was now his mark, for at that time the United States were not looked to as the place of refuge they have since become. After some little time, and not a little trouble, the situation of assistant-overseer on the estate of Dr. Douglas in that colony, was procured for him by one of his friends in the town of Irvine. Money to pay for his passage, however, he had not; and it at last occurred to him that the few pounds requisite for this purpose, might be raised by the publication of some of the finest poems that ever delighted mankind.

His landlord, Gavin Hamilton, Mr. Aiken, and other friends, encouraged him warmly; and after some hesitation, he at length resolved to hazard an experiment which might perhaps better his circumstances; and, if any tolerable number of subscribers could be procured, could not make them worse than they were already. His rural patrons exerted themselves with success in the matter; and so many copies were soon subscribed for, that Burns entered into terms with a printer in Kilmarnock, and began to copy out his performances for the press. He carried his MSS. piecemeal to the printer; and encouraged by the ray of light which unexpected patronage had begun to throw on his affairs, composed, while the printing was in progress, some of the best poems of the collection. The tale of the *Twa Dogs*, for instance, with which the volume commenced, is known to have been written in the short interval between the publication being determined on and the printing begun. His own account of the business to Dr. Moore is as follows:—

"I gave up my part of the farm to my brother: in truth, it was only nominally mine; and made what little preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But before leaving my native land, I resolved to publish my Poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power: I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver—or, perhaps, a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the

world of spirits. I can truly say that, *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion, that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves.—To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others: I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet: I studied assiduously Nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, for which I got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty.*—My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides, I pocketed nearly £20. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

"Hungry ruin had me in the wind."

"I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy night is gathering fast*, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition."

To the above rapid narrative of the poet, we may annex a few details, gathered from his various biographers and from his own letters.—While the Kilmarnock edition was in the press, it appears that his friends Hamilton and Aiken revolved various schemes for procuring him the means of remaining in Scotland; and having studied some of the practical branches of mathematics, as we have seen, and in particular *guaging*, it occurred to himself that a situation in the Excise might be better suited to him than any other he was at all likely to obtain by the intervention of such patrons as he possessed. He appears to have lingered longer after the publication of the poems than one might suppose from his own narrative, in the hope that these gentlemen might at length succeed in their efforts in his behalf. The poems were received with favour, even with rapture, in the county of Ayr, and ere long over the adjoining counties. "Old and young," thus speaks Robert Heron, "high and low, grave and gay, learned or ignorant, were alike delighted, agitated, transported. I was at that time resident in Galloway, contiguous to Ayrshire, and I can well remember how even ploughboys and maid-servants would have glady bestowed the wages they earned the most hardly, and which they wanted to purchase necessary clothing, if they might but procure the Works of Burns."—The poet soon found that his person also had become an object of general curiosity, and that a lively interest in his personal fortunes was excited among some of the gen-

* Gilbert Burns mentions, that a single individual, Mr. William Parker, merchant in Kilmarnock, subscribed for 35 copies.

try of the district, when the details of his story reached them, as it was pretty sure to do, along with his modest and manly preface.* Among others, the celebarted Professor Dugald Stewart of Edinburgh, and his accomplished lady, then resident at their beautiful seat of Catrine, began to notice him with much polite and friendly attention. Dr. Hugh Blair, who then held an eminent place in the literary society of Scotland, happened to be paying Mr. Stewart a visit, and on reading *The Holy Fair*, at once pronounced it the "work of a very great genius;" and Mrs. Stewart, herself a poetess, flattered him perhaps still more highly by her warm commendations. But, above all, his little volume happened to attract the notice of Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, a lady of high birth and ample fortune, enthusiastically attached to her country, and interested in whatever appeared to concern the honour of Scotland. This excellent woman, while slowly recovering from the languor of an illness, laid her hand accidentally on the new production of the provincial press, and opened the volume at *The Cottar's Saturday Night*. "She read it over," says Gilbert, "with the greatest pleasure and surprise; the poet's description of the simple cottagers operated on her mind like the charm of a powerful exorcist, repelling the demon ennui, and restoring her to her wonted inward harmony and satisfaction." Mrs. Dunlop instantly sent an express to Mossgiel, distant sixteen miles from her residence, with a very kind letter to Burns, requesting him to supply her, if he could, with half-a-dozen copies of the book, and to call at Dunlop as soon as he could find it convenient. Burns was from home, but he acknowledged the favour conferred on him in this very interesting letter:—

"MADAM, *Ayrshire*, 1786.

"I AM truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honoured with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus; nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture, when those whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honour him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the *Saviour of his Country*.

"Great patriot hero! ill requited chief!"

"The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was *The Life of Hannibal*; the next was *The History of Sir William Wallace*: for several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious but unfortunate stories. In those boyish days I remember in particular being struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

"Syne to the Leglan wood, when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat."

* See Prose Compositions.

" I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen of miles to pay my respects to the Leglan wood, with as much devout enthsiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymer), that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits."

Shortly afterwards commenced a personal acquaintance with this amiable and intelligent lady, who seems to have filled in some degree the place of Sage Mentor to the poet, and who never afterwards ceased to befriend him to the utmost of her power. His letters to Mrs. Dunlop form a very large proportion of all his subsequent correspondence, and, addressed as they were to a person, whose sex, age, rank, and benevolence, inspired at once profound respect and a graceful confidence, will ever remain the most pleasing of all the materials of our poet's biography.

At the residences of these new acquaintances, Burns was introduced into society of a class which he had not before approached; and of the manner in which he stood the trial, Mr. Stewart thus writes to Dr. Currie :—

" His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth; but without any thing that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him; and listened, with apparent attention and deference, on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance; and his dread of any thing approaching to meanness or servility, rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable among his various attainments than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language, when he spoke in company, more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided, more successfully than most Scotsmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology. At this time, Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy, that he had seriously formed a plan for going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation, not, however, without lamenting that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman or gauger in his own country."

The provincial applause of his publication, and the consequent notice of his superiors, however flattering such things must have been, were far from administering any essential relief to the urgent necessities of Burns's situation. Very shortly after his first visit to Catrine, where he met with the young and amiable Basil Lord Daer, whose condescension and kindness on the occasion he celebrates in some well-known verses, we find the poet writing to his friend, Mr. Aiken of Ayr, in the following sad strain :—" I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within respecting the Excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business, the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home; and besides, I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes

which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals, like vultures, when attention is not called away by society, or the vagaries of the muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad; and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances every thing that can be laid in the scale against it."

He proceeds to say, that he claims no right to complain. "The world has in general been kind to me, fully up to my deserts. I was for some time past fast getting into the pining distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart, and inoffensive manners, (which last, by the by, was rather more than I could well boast), still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be *done*. When all my schoolfellows and youthful compeers were striking off, with eager hope and earnest intent, on some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was "standing idle in the market-place," or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim. You see, Sir, that if to *know* one's errors, were a probability of *mending* them, I stand a fair chance; but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it."

In the midst of all the distresses of this period of suspense, Burns found time, as he tells Mr. Aiken, for some "vagaries of the muse;" and one or two of these may deserve to be noticed here, as throwing light on his personal demeanour during this first summer of his fame. The poems appeared in July, and one of the first persons of superior condition (Gilbert, indeed, says *the* first) who courted his acquaintance in consequence of having read them, was Mrs. Stewart of Stair, a beautiful and accomplished lady. Burns presented her on this occasion with some MSS. songs; and among the rset, with one in which her own charms were celebrated in that warm strain of compliment which our poet seems to have all along considered the most proper to be used whenever this fair lady was to be addressed in rhyme.

"Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise:
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream,
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.
How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild evening sweeps over the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me."

It was in the spring of the same year, that he happened, in the course of an evening ramble on the banks of the Ayr, to meet with a young and lovely unmarried lady, of the family of Alexander of Ballamyle, of whom, it was said, her personal charms corresponded with the character of her mind. The incident gave rise to a poem, of which an account will be found in the following letter to Miss Alexander, the object of his inspiration:—

" MADAM, *Mossgiel*, 18*th Nov.* 1786.

" POETS are such *outre* beings, so much the children of wayward fancy and capricious whim, that I believe the world generally allows them a larger latitude in the laws of propriety, than the sober sons of judgment and prudence. I mention this as an apology for the liberties that a nameless stranger has taken with you in the enclosed poem, which he begs leave to present you with. Whether it has poetical merit any way worthy of the theme, I am not the proper judge; but it is the best my abilities can produce; and what to a good heart will perhaps be a superior grace, it is equally sincere as fervent.

" The scenery was nearly taken from real life, though I dare say, Madam, you do not recollect it, as I believe you scarcely noticed the poetic *reveur* as he wandered by you. I had roved out as chance directed in the favourite haunts of my muse, on the banks of the Ayr, to view nature in all the gaiety of the vernal year. The evening sun was flaming over the distant western hills; not a breath stirred the crimson opening blossom, or the verdant spreading leaf. It was a golden moment for a poetic heart. I listened to the feathered warblers, pouring their harmony on every hand, with a congenial kindred regard, and frequently turned out of my path, lest I should disturb their little songs, or frighten them to another station. Surely, said I to myself, he must be a wretch indeed, who, regardless of your harmonious endeavour to please him, can eye your elusive flights to discover your secret recesses, and to rob you of all the property nature gives you, your dearest comforts, your helpless nestlings. Even the hoary hawthorn-twig that shot across the way, what heart at such a time but must have been interested in its welfare, and wished it preserved from the rudely-browsing cattle, or the withering eastern blast? Such was the scene, and such the hour, when in a corner of my prospect, I spied one of the fairest pieces of Nature's workmanship that ever crowned a poetic landscape, or met a poet's eye, those visionary bards excepted who hold commerce with aërial beings! Had Calumny and Villany taken my walk, they had at that moment sworn eternal peace with such an object.

" What an hour of inspiration for a poet! It would have raised plain, dull, historic prose into metaphor and measure.

" The enclosed song was the work of my return home; and perhaps it but poorly answers what might be expected from such a scene.

. . . . . .

" I have the honour to be," &c.

" 'Twas even—the dwey fields were green,
On every blade the pearls hang;*
The Zephyr wanton'd round the beam,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang;
In every glen the mavis sang,
All nature listening seemed the while,
Except where green-wood echoes rang,
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward strayed,
My heart rejoiced in nature's joy,
When musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanc'd to spy;
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like nature's vernal smile,

* Hang, Scotticism for *hung*.

Perfection whispered passing by,
Behold the lass o' Ballochmyle !*

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
And sweet is night in autumn mild;
When roving through the garden gay,
Or wandering in the lonely wild:
But woman, nature's darling child !
There all her charms she does compile:
Even there her other works are foil'd
By the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

O had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Though sheltered in the lowest shed
That ever rose on Scotland's plain.
Through weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would toil,
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

Then pride might climb the slippery steep,
Where fame and honours lofty shine;
And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
Or downward seek the Indian mine:
Give me the cot below the pine,
To tend the flocks or till the soil,
And every day have joys divine,
With the bonny lass o' Ballochmyle.

The autumn of this eventful year was now drawing to a close, and Burns, who had already lingered three months in the hope, which he now considered vain, of an excise appointment, perceived that another year must be lost altogether, unless he made up his mind, and secured his passage to the West Indies. The Kilmarnock edition of his poems was, however, nearly exhausted; and his friends encouraged him to produce another at the same place, with the view of equipping himself the better for the necessities of his voyage. But the printer at Kilmarnock would not undertake the new impression unless Burns advanced the price of the paper required for it; and with this demand the poet had no means of complying. Mr. Ballantyne, the chief magistrate of Ayr, (the same gentleman to whom the poem on the *Twa Brigs of Ayr* was afterwards inscribed), offered to furnish the money; and probably this kind offer would have been accepted. But, ere this matter could be arranged, the prospects of the poet were, in a very unexpected manner, altered and improved.

Burns went to pay a parting visit to Dr. Laurie, minister of Loudoun, a gentleman from whom, and his accomplished family, he had previously received many kind attentions. After taking farewell of this benevolent circle, the poet proceeded, as the night was setting in, "to convey his chest," as he says, "so far on the road to Greenock, where he was to embark in a few days for America." And it was under these circumstances that he composed the song already referred to, which he meant as his farewell dirge to his native land, and which ends thus:—

"Farewell, old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales,
The scenes where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past unhappy loves.

* *Variation.* The lily's hue and rose's dye
Bespoke the lass o' Ballochmyle.

Farewell, my friends! farewell, my foes!
My peace with these—my love with those—
The bursting tears my heart declare,
Farewell, the bonny banks of Ayr."

Dr. Laurie had given Burns much good counsel, and what comfort he could, at parting; but prudently said nothing of an effort which he had previously made in his behalf. He had sent a copy of the poems, with a sketch of the author's history, to his friend Dr. Thomas Blacklock of Edinburgh, with a request that he would introduce both to the notice of those persons whose opinions were at the time most listened to in regard to literary productions in Scotland, in the hope that, by their intervention, Burns might yet be rescued from the necessity of expatriating himself. Dr. Blacklock's answer reached Dr. Laurie a day or two after Burns had made his visit, and composed his dirge; and it was not yet too late. Laurie forwarded it immediately to Mr. Gavin Hamilton, who carried it to Burns. It is as follows:—

"I ought to have acknowledged your favour long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and perhaps one of the most genuine entertainments of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems; at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force or beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages; but none equal to that with which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

"Mr. Stewart, Professor of Morals in this University, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers; but whether this was done or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr. Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentleman, to whom I showed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardour, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed; as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertions of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than any thing of the kind which has been published in my memory."

We have already seen with what surprise and delight Burns read this generous letter. Although he had ere this conversed with more than one person of established literary reputation, and received from them attentions, for which he was ever after grateful,—the despondency of his spirit appears to have remained as dark as ever, up to the very hour when his landlord produced Dr. Blacklock's letter.—"There was never," Heron says, "perhaps, one among all mankind whom you might more truly have called an angel upon earth than Dr. Blacklock. He was guileless and innocent

as a child, yet endowed with manly sagacity and penetration. His heart was a perpetual spring of benignity. His feelings were all tremblingly alive to the sense of the sublime, the beautiful, the tender, the pious, the virtuous. Poetry was to him the dear solace of perpetual blindness." This was not the man to act as Walpole did to Chatterton; to discourage with feeble praise, and in order to shift off the trouble of future patronage, to bid the poet relinquish poetry and mind his plough.—"Dr. Blacklock," says Burns himself, "belonged to a set of critics, for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star that had so long shed its blasting influence on my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir." *

* Letter to Moore.

CHAPTER V.

CONTENTS.—*The Poet winters in Edinburgh, 1786–7—By his advent, the condition of that city, Literary, Legal, Philosophical, Patrician, and Pedantic, is lighted up, as by a meteor —He is in the full tide of his fame there, and for a while caressed by the fashionable— What happens to him generally in that new world, and his behaviour under the varying and very trying circumstances—The tavern life then greatly followed—The Poet tempted beyond all former experience by bacchanals of every degree—His conversational talent universally admitted, as not the least of his talents—The Ladies like to be carried off their feet by it, while the philosophers hardly keep theirs—Edition of 1500 copies by Creech, which yields much money to the Poet—Resolves to visit the classic scenes of his own country—Assailed with thick-coming visions of a reflux to bear him back to the region of poverty and seclusion.*

"Edina! Scotia's darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sovereign powers;
From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of Ayr I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade."

BURNS found several of his old Ayrshire acquaintances established in Edinburgh, and, I suppose, felt himself constrained to give himself up for a brief space to their society. He printed, however, without delay, a prospectus of a second edition of his poems, and being introduced by Mr. Dalrymple of Orangefield to the Earl of Glencairn, that amiable nobleman easily persuaded Creech, then the chief bookseller in Edinburgh, to undertake the publication. The Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, the most agreeable of companions, and the most benignant of wits, took him also, as the poet expresses it, "under his wing." The kind Blacklock received him with all the warmth of paternal affection, and introduced him to Dr. Blair, and other eminent *literati;* his subscription lists were soon filled; Lord Glencairn made interest with the Caledonian Hunt, (an association of the most distinguished members of the northern aristocracy), to accept the dedication of the forthcoming edition, and to subscribe individually for copies. Several noblemen, especially of the west of Scotland, came forward with subscription-moneys considerably beyond the usual rate. In so small a capital, where every body knows every body, that which becomes a favourite topic in one leading circle of society, soon excites an universal interest; and before Burns had been a fortnight in Edinburgh, we find him writing to his earliest patron, Gavin Hamilton, in these terms:—"For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas a Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth-day incribed among the wonderful events in the Poor Robin and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the Black Monday, and the Battle of Bothwell Bridge."

It is but a melancholy business to trace among the records of literary history, the manner in which most great original geniuses have been greeted on their first appeals to the world, by the contemporary arbiters of taste; coldly and timidly indeed have the sympathies of professional criticism flowed on most such occasions in past times and in the present: But the reception of Burns was worthy of *The Man of Feeling*. Mr. Henry Mackenzie was a man of genius, and of a polished, as well as a liberal taste. After alluding to the provincial circulation and reputation of the first edition of the poems, Mr. Mackenzie thus wrote in the Lounger, an Edinburgh periodical of that period:—"I hope I shall not be thought to assume too much, if I endeavour to place him in a higher point of view, to call for a verdict of his country on the merits of his works, and to claim for him those honours which their excellence appears to deserve. In mentioning the circumstance of his humble station, I mean not to rest his pretensions solely on that title, or to urge the merits of his poetry, when considered in relation to the lowness of his birth, and the little opportunity of improvement which his education could afford. These particulars, indeed, must excite our wonder at his productions; but his poetry, considered abstractedly, and without the apologies arising from his situation, seems to me fully entitled to command our feelings, and to obtain our applause." . . . . . After quoting various passages, in some of which his readers "must discover a high tone of feeling, and power, and energy of expression, particularly and strongly characteristic of the mind and the voice of a poet," and others as shewing "the power of genius, not less admirable in tracing the manners, than in painting the passions, or in drawing the scenery of nature," and "with what uncommon penetration and sagacity this heaven-taught ploughman, from his humble and unlettered condition, had looked on men and manners," the critic concluded with an eloquent appeal in behalf of the poet personally: "To repair," said he, "the wrong of suffering or neglected merit; to call forth genius from the obscurity in which it had pined indignant, and place it where it may profit or delight the world—these are exertions which give to wealth an enviable superiority, to greatness and to patronage a laudable pride."*

The appeal thus made for such a candidate was not unattended to. Burns was only a very short time in Edinburgh when he thus wrote to one of his early friends:—"I was, when first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation;" and he concludes the same letter with an ominous prayer for "better health and more spirits."†—Two or three weeks later, we find him writing as follows:—"(January 14, 1787). I went to a Mason Lodge yesternight, where the M.W. Grand Master Charteris, and all the Grand Lodge of Scotland visited. The meeting was numerous and elegant: all the different lodges about town were present in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity, among other general toasts gave, 'Caledonia and Caledonia's bard, Brother Burns,' which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunderstruck; and trembling in every nerve, made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, one of the

* The Lounger for Saturday, December 9, 1786.
† Letter to Mr. Ballantyne of Ayr, December 13, 1786; Reliques, p. 12.

Grand Officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, 'very well indeed,' which set me something to rights again."—And a few weeks later still, he is thus addressed by one of his old associates who was meditating a visit to Edinburgh. "By all accounts, it will be a difficult matter to get a sight of you at all, unless your company is bespoke a week beforehand. There are great rumours here of your intimacy with the Duchess of Gordon, and other ladies of distinction. I am really told that—

"Cards to invite, fly by thousands each night;"

and if you had one, there would also, I suppose, be 'bribes for your old secretary.' I observe you are resolved to make hay while the sun shines, and avoid, if possible, the fate of poor Ferguson. *Quærenda pecunia primum est—Virtus post nummos*, is a good maxim to thrive by. You seemed to despise it while in this country; but, probably, some philosophers in Edinburgh have taught you better sense."

In this proud career, however, the popular idol needed no slave to whisper whence he had risen, and whither he was to return in the ebb of the spring-tide of fortune. His "prophetic soul" carried always a sufficient memento. He bore all his honours in a manner worthy of himself; and of this the testimonies are so numerous, that the only difficulty is that of selection. "The attentions he received," says Mr. Dugald Stewart, "from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country; nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance."—Professor Walker, who met him for the first time, early in the same season, at breakfast in Dr. Blacklock's house, has thus recorded his impressions:—"I was not much struck with his first appearance, as I had previously heard it described. His person, though strong and well knit, and much superior to what might be expected in a ploughman, was still rather coarse in its outline. His stature, from want of setting up, appeared to be only of the middle size, but was rather above it. His motions were firm and decided, and though without any pretensions to grace, were at the same time so free from clownish constraint, as to show that he had not always been confined to the society of his profession. His countenance was not of that elegant cast, which is most frequent among the upper ranks, but it was manly and intelligent, and marked by a thoughtful gravity which shaded at times into sternness. In his large dark eye the most striking index of his genius resided. It was full of mind; and would have been singularly expressive, under the management of one who could employ it with more art, for the purpose of expression. He was plainly, but properly dressed, in a style mid-way between the holiday costume of a farmer, and that of the company with which he now associated. His black hair, without powder, at a time when it was very generally worn, was tied behind, and spread upon his forehead. Upon the whole, from his person, physiognomy, and dress, had I met him near a seaport, and been required to guess his condition, I should have probably conjectured him to be the master of a merchant vessel of the most respectable class. In no part of his manner was there the slightest degree of affectation, nor could a stranger have suspected, from any thing in his behaviour

or conversation, that he had been for some months the favourite of all the fashionable circles of a metropolis. In conversation he was powerful. His conceptions and expression were of corresponding vigour, and on all subjects were as remote as possible from common places. Though somewhat authoritative, it was in a way which gave little offence, and was readily imputed to his inexperience in those modes of smoothing dissent and softening assertion, which are important characteristics of polished manners. After breakfast I requested him to communicate some of his unpublished pieces, and he recited his farewell song to the Banks of Ayr, introducing it with a description of the circumstances in which it was composed, more striking than the poem itself. I paid particular attention to his recitation, which was plain, slow, articulate, and forcible, but without any eloquence or art. He did not always lay the emphasis with propriety, nor did he humour the sentiment by the variations of his voice. He was standing, during the time, with his face towards the window, to which, and not to his auditors, he directed his eye—thus depriving himself of any additional effect which the language of his composition might have borrowed from the language of his countenance. In this he resembled the generality of singers in ordinary company, who, to shun any charge of affectation, withdraw all meaning from their features, and lose the advantage by which vocal performers on the stage augment the impression, and give energy to the sentiment of the song. The day after my first introduction to Burns, I supped in company with him at Dr. Blair's. The other guests were very few, and as each had been invited chiefly to have an opportunity of meeting with the poet, the Doctor endeavoured to draw him out, and to make him the central figure of the group. Though he therefore furnished the greatest proportion of the conversation, he did no more than what he saw evidently was expected." *

To these reminiscences I shall now add those of one to whom is always readily accorded the willing ear, Sir Walter Scott.—He thus writes :—"As for Burns, I may truly say, *Virgilium vidi tantum.* I was a lad of fifteen in 1786-7, when he came first to Edinburgh, but had sense and feeling enough to be much interested in his poetry, and would have given the world to know him; but I had very little acquaintance with any literary people, and still less with the gentry of the west country, the two sets that he most frequented. Mr. Thomas Grierson was at that time a clerk of my father's. He knew Burns, and promised to ask him to his lodgings to dinner, but had no opportunity to keep his word; otherwise I might have seen more of this distinguished man. As it was, I saw him one day at the late venerable Professor Fergusson's, where there were several gentlemen of literary reputation, among whom I remember the celebrated Mr. Dugald Stewart. Of course we youngsters sat silent, looked, and listened. The only thing I remember which was remarkable in Burns's manner, was the effect produced upon him by a print of Bunbury's, representing a soldier lying dead on the snow, his dog sitting in misery on one side,—on the other, his widow, with a child in her arms. These lines were written beneath,—

> "Cold on Canadian hills, or Minden's plain,
> Perhaps that parent wept her soldier slain—
> Bent o'er her babe, her eye dissolved in dew,
> The big drops, mingling with the milk he drew,

* Morrison's Burns, vol. i. pp. lxxi, lxxii.

Gave the sad presage of his future years,
The child of misery baptized in tears."

" Burns seemed much affected by the print, or rather the ideas which it suggested to his mind. He actually shed tears. He asked whose the lines were, and it chanced that nobody but myself remembered that they occur in a half-forgotten poem of Langhorne's, called by the unpromising title of The Justice of Peace. I whispered my information to a friend present, who mentioned it to Burns, who rewarded me with a look and a word, which, though of mere civility, I then received, and still recollect, with very great pleasure.

" His person was strong and robust; his manners rustic, not clownish; a sort of dignified plainness and simplicity, which received part of its effect, perhaps, from one's knowledge of his extraordinary talents. His features are represented in Mr. Nasmyth's picture, but to me it conveys the idea, that they are diminished as if seen in perspective. I think his countenance was more massive than it looks in any of the portraits. I would have taken the poet, had I not known what he was, for a very sagacious country farmer of the old Scotch school, *i. e.* none of your modern agriculturists, who keep labourers for their drudgery, but the *douce gudeman* who held his own plough. There was a strong expression of sense and shrewdness in all his lineaments; the eye alone, I think, indicated the poetical character and temperament. It was large, and of a dark cast, which glowed (I say literally *glowed*) when he spoke with feeling or interest. I never saw such another eye in a human head, though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time. His conversation expressed perfect self-confidence, without the slightest presumption. Among the men who were the most learned of their time and country, he expressed himself with perfect firmness, but without the least intrusive forwardness; and when he differed in opinion, he did not hesitate to express it firmly, yet at the same time with modesty. I do not remember any part of his conversation distinctly enough to be quoted, nor did I ever see him again, except in the street, where he did not recognise me, as I could not expect he should. He was much caressed in Edinburgh, but (considering what literary emoluments have been since his day) the efforts made for his relief were extremely trifling. I remember on this occasion I mention, I thought Burns's acquaintance with English Poetry was rather limited, and also, that having twenty times the abilities of Allan Ramsay and of Ferguson, he talked of them with too much humility as his models; there was, doubtless, national predilection in his estimate. This is all I can tell you about Burns. I have only to add, that his dress corresponded with his manner. He was like a farmer dressed in his best to dine with the Laird. I do not speak in *malam partem*, when I say, I never saw a man in company with his superiors in station and information, more perfectly free from either the reality or the affectation of embarrassment. I was told, but did not observe it, that his address to females was extremely deferential, and always with a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged their attention particularly. I have heard the late Duchess of Gordon remark this.—I do not know any thing I can add to these recollections of forty years since."—

There can be no doubt that Burns made his first appearance at a period highly favourable for his reception as a British, and especially as a Scottish poet. Nearly forty years had elapsed since the death of Thomson:—

Collins, Gray, Goldsmith, had successively disappeared :—Dr. Johnson had belied the rich promise of his early appearance, and confined himself to prose; and Cowper had hardly begun to be recognized as having any considerable pretensions to fill the long-vacant throne in England. At home—without derogation from the merits either of *Douglas* or the *Minstrel*, be it said—men must have gone back at least three centuries to find a Scottish poet at all entitled to be considered as of that high order to which the generous criticism of Mackenzie at once admitted " the Ayrshire Ploughman." Of the form and garb of his composition, much, unquestionably and avowedly, was derived from his more immediate predecessors, Ramsay and Ferguson : but there was a bold mastery of hand in his picturesque descriptions, to produce any thing equal to which it was necessary to recall the days of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, and *Peebles to the Play;* and in his more solemn pieces, a depth of inspiration, and a massive energy of language, to which the dialect of his country had been a stranger, at least since " Dunbar the Mackar." The Muses of Scotland had never indeed been silent; and the ancient minstrelsy of the land, of which a slender portion had as yet been committed to the safeguard of the press, was handed from generation to generation, and preserved, in many a fragment, faithful images of the peculiar tenderness, and peculiar humour, of the national fancy and character—precious representations, which Burns himself never surpassed in his happiest efforts. But these were fragments; and with a scanty handful of exceptions, the best of them, at least of the serious kind, were very ancient. Among the numberless effusions of the Jacobite Muse, valuable as we now consider them for the record of manners and events, it would be difficult to point out half-a-dozen strains worthy, for poetical excellence alone, of a place among the old chivalrous ballads of the Southern, or even of the Highland Border. Generations had passed away since any Scottish poet had appealed to the sympathies of his countrymen in a lofty Scottish strain.

The dialect itself had been hardly dealt with. " It is my opinion," said Dr. Geddes, " that those who, for almost a century past, have written in Scotch, Allan Ramsay not excepted, have not duly discriminated the genuine idiom from its vulgarisms. They seem to have acted a similar part to certain pretended imitators of Spenser and Milton, who fondly imagine that they are copying from these great models, when they only mimic their antique mode of spelling, their obsolete terms, and their irregular constructions." And although I cannot well guess what the doctor considered as the irregular constructions of Milton, there can be no doubt of the general justice of his observations. Ramsay and Ferguson were both men of humble condition, the latter of the meanest, the former of no very elegant habits; and the dialect which had once pleased the ears of kings, who themselves did not disdain to display its powers and elegances in verse, did not come untarnished through their hands. Ferguson, who was entirely town-bred, smells more of the Cowgate than of the country; and pleasing as Ramsay's rustics are, he appears rather to have observed the surface of rural manners, in casual excursions to Pennycuik and the Hunter's Tryste, than to have expressed the results of intimate knowledge and sympathy. His dialect was a somewhat incongruous mixture of the Upper Ward of Lanarkshire and the Luckenbooths; and he could neither write English verses, nor engraft English phraseology on his Scotch, without betraying a lamentable want of skill in the use of his instruments. It was re-

served for Burns to interpret the inmost soul of the Scottish peasant in all its moods, and in verse exquisitely and intensely Scottish, without degrading either his sentiments or his language with one touch of vulgarity. Such is the delicacy of native taste, and the power of a truly masculine genius. This is the more remarkable, when we consider that the dialect of Burns's native district is, in all mouths but his own, a peculiarly offensive one. The few poets * whom the west of Scotland had produced in the old time, were all men of high condition; and who, of course, used the language, not of their own villages, but of Holyrood. Their productions, moreover, in so far as they have been produced, had nothing to do with the peculiar character and feelings of the men of the west. As Burns himself has said,—"It is somewhat singular, that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, &c. there is scarcely an old song or tune, which, from the title, &c. can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of, those counties."

The history of Scottish literature, from the union of the crowns to that of the kingdoms, has not yet been made the subject of any separate work at all worthy of its importance; nay, however much we are indebted to the learned labours of Pinkerton, Irving, and others, enough of the *general* obscurity of which Warton complained still continues, to the no small discredit of so accomplished a nation. But how miserably the *literature* of the country was affected by the loss of the court under whose immediate patronage it had, in almost all preceding times, found a measure of protection that will ever do honour to the memory of the unfortunate house of Stuart, appears to be indicated with sufficient plainness in the single fact, that no man can point out any Scottish author of the first rank in all the long period which intervened between Buchanan and Hume. The removal of the chief nobility and gentry, consequent on the Legislative Union, appeared to destroy our last hopes as a separate nation, possessing a separate literature of our own; nay, for a time, to have all but extinguished the flame of intellectual exertion and ambition. Long torn and harassed by religious and political feuds, this people had at last heard, as many believed, the sentence of irremediable degradation pronounced by the lips of their own prince and parliament. The universal spirit of Scotland was humbled; the unhappy insurrections of 1715 and 1745 revealed the full extent of her internal disunion; and England took, in some respects, merciless advantage of the fallen.

Time, however, passed on; and Scotland, recovering at last from the blow which had stunned her energies, began to vindicate her pretensions, in the only departments which had been left open to her, with a zeal and a success which will ever distinguish one of the brightest pages of her history. Deprived of every national honour and distinction which it was possible to remove—all the high branches of external ambition lopped off,—sunk at last, as men thought, effectually into a province, willing to take law with passive submission, in letters as well as polity, from her powerful sister—the old kingdom revived suddenly from her stupor, and once more asserted her name in reclamations which England was compelled not only to hear, but to applaud, and "wherewith all Europe rung from side to side," at the moment when a national poet came forward to profit by the reflux of a thousand half-forgotten sympathies—amidst the full joy of a national pride revived and re-established beyond the dream of hope.

* Such as Kennedy, Shaw, Montgomery, and, more lately, Hamilton of Gilbertfield.

It will always reflect honour on the galaxy of eminent men of letters, who, in their various departments, shed lustre at that period on the name of Scotland, that they suffered no pedantic prejudices to interfere with their reception of Burns. Had he not appeared personally among them, it may be reasonably doubted whether this would have been so. They were men, generally speaking, of very social habits; living together in a small capital; nay, almost all of them, in or about one street, maintaining friendly intercourse continually; not a few of them considerably addicted to the pleasures which have been called, by way of excellence, I presume, convivial. Burns's poetry might have procured him access to these circles; but it was the extraordinary resources he displayed in conversation, the strong vigorous sagacity of his observations on life and manners, the splendour of his wit, and the glowing energy of his eloquence when his feelings were stirred, that made him the object of serious admiration among these practised masters of the arts of *talk*. There were several of them who probably adopted in their hearts the opinion of Newton, that "poetry is ingenious nonsense." Adam Smith, for one, could have had no very ready respect at the service of such an unproductive labourer as a maker of Scottish ballads; but the stateliest of these philosophers had enough to do to maintain the attitude of equality, when brought into personal contact with Burns's gigantic understanding; and every one of them whose impressions on the subject have been recorded, agrees in pronouncing his conversation to have been the most remarkable thing about him. And yet it is amusing enough to trace the lingering reluctance of some of these polished scholars, about admitting, even to themselves, in his absence, what it is certain they all felt sufficiently when they were actually in his presence. It is difficult, for example, to read without a smile that letter of Mr. Dugald Stewart, in which he describes himself and Mr. Alison as being surprised to discover that Burns, after reading the latter author's elegant *Essay on Taste*, had really been able to form some shrewd enough notion of the general principles of the association of *ideas*.

Burns would probably have been more satisfied with himself in these learned societies, had he been less addicted to giving free utterance in conversation to the very feelings which formed the noblest inspirations of his poetry. His sensibility was as tremblingly exquisite, as his sense was masculine and solid; and he seems to have ere long suspected that the professional metaphysicians who applauded his rapturous bursts, surveyed them in reality with something of the same feeling which may be supposed to attend a skilful surgeon's inspection of a curious specimen of morbid anatomy. Why should he lay his inmost heart thus open to dissectors, who took special care to keep the knife from their own breasts? The secret blush that overspread his haughty countenance when such suggestions occured to him in his solitary hours, may be traced in the opening lines of a diary which he began to keep ere he had been long in Edinburgh. "*April* 9, 1787.—As I have seen a good deal of human life in Edinburgh, a great many characters which are new to one bred up in the shades of life, as I have been, I am determined to take down my remarks on the spot. Gray observes, in a letter to Mr. Palgrave, that, 'half a word fixed, upon, or near the spot, is worth a cart-load of recollection.' I don't know how it is with the world in general, but with me, making my remarks is by no means a solitary pleasure. I want some one to laugh with me, some one to be grave with me, some one to please me and help my discrimination,

with his or her own remark, and at times, no doubt, to admire my acuteness and penetration. The world are so busied with selfish pursuits, ambition, vanity, interest, or pleasure, that very few think it worth their while to make any observation on what passes around them, except where that observation is a sucker, or branch, of the darling plant they are rearing in their fancy. Nor am I sure, notwithstanding all the sentimental flights of novel-writers, and the sage philosophy of moralists, whether we are capable of so intimate and cordial a coalition of friendship, as that one man may pour out his bosom, his every thought and floating fancy, his very inmost soul, with unreserved confidence, to another, without hazard of losing part of that respect which man deserves from man; or, from the unavoidable imperfections attending human nature, of one day repenting his confidence. For these reasons I am determined to make these pages my confidant. I will sketch every character that any way strikes me, to the best of my power, with unshrinking justice. I will insert anecdotes, and take down remarks, in the old law phrase, *without fear or favour*.—Where I hit on any thing clever, my own applause will, in some measure, feast my vanity; and, begging Patroclus' and Achates' pardon, I think a lock and key a security, at least equal to the bosom of any friend whatever." And the same lurking thorn of suspicion peeps out elsewhere in this complaint: "I know not how it is; I find I can win liking—but not respect."

"Burns (says a great living poet, in commenting on the free style of Dr. Currie) was a man of extraordinary genius, whose birth, education, and employments had placed and kept him in a situation far below that in which the writers and readers of expensive volumes are usually found. Critics upon works of fiction have laid it down as a rule that remoteness of place, in fixing the choice of a subject, and in prescribing the mode of treating it, is equal in effect to distance of time;—restraints may be thrown off accordingly. Judge then of the delusions which artificial distinctions impose, when to a man like Dr. Currie, writing with views so honourable, the social condition of the individual of whom he was treating, could seem to place him at such a distance from the exalted reader, that ceremony might be discarded with him, and his memory sacrificed, as it were, almost without compunction. This is indeed to be crushed beneath the furrow's weight."* It would be idle to suppose that the feelings here ascribed, and justly, no question, to the amiable and benevolent Currie, did not often find their way into the bosoms of those persons of superior condition and attainments, with whom Burns associated at the period when he first emerged into the blaze of reputation; and what found its way into men's bosoms was not likely to avoid betraying itself to the perspicacious glance of the proud peasant. How perpetually he was alive to the dread of being looked down upon as a man, even by those who most zealously applauded the works of his genius, might perhaps be traced through the whole sequence of his letters. When writing to men of high station, at least, he preserves, in every instance, the attitude of self-defence. But it is only in his own secret tables that we have the fibres of his heart laid bare; and the cancer of this jealousy is seen distinctly at its painful work: *habemus reum et confitentem*. "There are few of the sore evils under the sun give me more uneasiness and chagrin than the comparison how a man of genius, nay, of avowed worth, is received everywhere, with the reception which a

* Mr. Wordsworth's letter to a friend of Burns, p. 12.

mere ordinary character, decorated with the trappings and futile distinctions of fortune, meets. I imagine a man of abilities, his breast glowing with honest pride, conscious that men are born equal, still giving honour to whom honour is due; he meets, at a great man's table, a Squire something, or a Sir somebody; he knows the noble landlord, at heart, gives the bard, or whatever he is, a share of his good wishes, beyond, perhaps, any one at table; yet how will it mortify him to see a fellow, whose abilities would scarcely have made an eightpenny tailor, and whose heart is not worth three farthings, meet with attention and notice, that are withheld from the son of genius and poverty? The noble Glencairn has wounded me to the soul here, because I dearly esteem, respect, and love him. He showed so much attention—engrossing attention, one day, to the only blockhead at table, (the whole company consisted of his lordship, dunderpate, and myself), that I was within half a point of throwing down my gage of contemptuous defiance; but he shook my hand, and looked so benevolently good at parting—God bless him! though I should never see him more, I shall love him until my dying day! I am pleased to think I am so capable of the throes of gratitude, as I am miserably deficient in some other virtues. With Dr. Blair I am more at my ease. I never respect him with humble veneration; but when he kindly interests himself in my welfare, or still more, when he descends from his pinnacle, and meets me on equal ground in conversation, my heart overflows with what is called liking. When he neglects me for the mere carcass of greatness, or when his eye measures the difference of our points of elevation, I say to myself, with scarcely any emotion, what do I care for him, or his pomp either?" "It is not easy (says Burns) forming an exact judgment of any one; but, in my opinion, Dr. Blair is merely an astonishing proof of what industry and application can do. Natural parts like his are frequently to be met with; his vanity is proverbially known among his own acquaintances; but he is justly at the head of what may be called fine writing, and a critic of the first, the very first rank in prose; even in poetry a bard of nature's making can only take the pass of him. He has a heart, not of the very finest water, but far from being an ordinary one. In short, he is a truly worthy and most respectable character."

A nice speculator on the 'follies of the wise,' D'Israeli, * says—"Once we were nearly receiving from the hand of genius the most curious sketches of the temper, the irascible humours, the delicacy of soul, even to its shadowiness, from the warm *sbozzos* of Burns, when he began a diary of his heart—a narrative of characters and events, and a chronology of his emotions. It was natural for such a creature of sensation and passion to project such a regular task, but quite impossible to get through it." This most curious document, it is to be observed, has not yet been printed entire. Another generation will, no doubt, see the whole of the confession; however, what has already been given, it may be surmised, indicates sufficiently the complexion of Burns's prevailing moods during his moments of retirement at this interesting period of his history. It was in such a mood (they recurred often enough) that he thus reproached "Nature, partial nature:"—

> "Thou givest the ass his hide, the snail his shell;
> The invenom'd wasp victorious guards his cell:

* D'Israeli on the Literary Character, vol. i. p. 136.

> But, oh! thou bitter stepmother, and hard,
> To thy poor fenceless naked child, the bard. . . .
> In naked feeling and in aching pride,
> He bears the unbroken blast from every side."

No blast pierced this haughty soul so sharply as the contumely of condescension.

One of the poet's remarks, when he first came to Edinburgh, has been handed down to us by Cromek.—It was, "that between the men of rustic life and the polite world he observed little difference—that in the former, though unpolished by fashion and unenlightened by science, he had found much observation, and much intelligence—but a refined and accomplished woman was a thing almost new to him, and of which he had formed but a very inadequate idea." To be pleased, is the old and the best receipt how to please; and there is abundant evidence that Burns's success, among the high-born ladies of Edinburgh, was much greater than among the "stately patricians," as he calls them, of his own sex. The vivid expression of one of them has almost become proverbial—that she never met with a man, "whose conversation so completely carried her off her feet," as Burns's. The late Duchess of Gordon, who was remarkable for her own conversational talent, as well as for her beauty and address, is supposed to be here referred to. But even here, he was destined to feel ere long something of the fickleness of fashion. He confessed to one of his old friends, ere the season was over, that some who had caressed him the most zealously, no longer seemed to know him, when he bowed in passing their carriages, and many more acknowledged his salute but coldly.

It is but too true, that ere this season was over, Burns had formed connexions in Edinburgh which could not have been regarded with much approbation by the eminent literati, in whose society his *debut* had made so powerful an impression. But how much of the blame, if serious blame, indeed, there was in the matter, ought to attach to his own fastidious jealousy—how much to the mere caprice of human favour, we have scanty means of ascertaining: No doubt, both had their share; and it is also sufficiently apparent that there were many points in Burns's conversational habits which men, accustomed to the delicate observances of refined society, might be more willing to tolerate under the first excitement of personal curiosity, than from any very deliberate estimate of the claims of such a genius, under such circumstances developed. He by no means restricted his sarcastic observations on those whom he encountered in the world to the confidence of his note-book; but startled polite ears with the utterance of audacious epigrams, far too witty not to obtain general circulation in so small a society as that of the northern capital, far too bitter not to produce deep resentment, far too numerous not to spread fear almost as widely as admiration. Even when nothing was farther from his thoughts than to inflict pain, his ardour often carried him headlong into sad scrapes; witness, for example, the anecdote given by Professor Walker, of his entering into a long discussion of the merits of the popular preachers of the day, at the table of Dr. Blair, and enthusiastically avowing his low opinion of all the rest in comparison with Dr. Blair's own colleague * and most formidable rival—a man, certainly, endowed with extraordinary graces of voice and manner, a generous and amiable strain of feeling, and a copious flow of language; but having no pretensions either to the general accomplishments

* Dr. Robert Walker.

for which Blair was honoured in a most accomplished society, or to the polished elegance which he first introduced into the eloquence of the Scottish pulpit. Mr. Walker well describes the unpleasing effects of such an *escapade;* the conversation during the rest of the evening, " labouring under that compulsory effort which was unavoidable, while the thoughts of all were full of the only subject on which it was improper to speak." Burns showed his good sense by making no effort to repair this blunder ; but years afterwards, he confessed that he could never recall it without exquisite pain. Mr. Walker properly says, it did honour to Dr. Blair that his kindness remained totally unaltered by this occurrence ; but the Professor would have found nothing to admire in that circumstance, had he not been well aware of the rarity of such good-nature among the *genus irritabile* of authors, orators, and wits.

A specimen (which some will think worse, some better) is thus recorded by Cromek :—" At a private breakfast, in a literary circle of Edinburgh, the conversation turned on the poetical merit and pathos of *Gray's Elegy,* a poem of which he was enthusiastically fond. A clergyman present, remarkable for his love of paradox and for his eccentric notions upon every subject, distinguished himself by an injudicious and ill-timed attack on this exquisite poem, which Burns, with generous warmth for the reputation of Gray, manfully defended. As the gentleman's remarks were rather general than specific, Burns urged him to bring forward the passages which he thought exceptionable. He made several attempts to quote the poem, but always in a blundering, inaccurate manner. Burns bore all this for a good while with his usual good-natured forbearance, till at length, goaded by the fastidious criticisms and wretched quibblings of his opponent, he roused himself, and with an eye flashing contempt and indignation, and with great vehemence of gesticulation, he thus addressed the cold critic :—' Sir, I now perceive a man may be an excellent judge of poetry by square and rule, and after all be a d——d blockhead.' "—Another of the instances may be mentioned, which shew the poet's bluntness of manner, and how true the remark afterwards made by Mr. Ramsay is, that in the game of society he did not know when to play on or off. While the second edition of his Poems was passing through the press, Burns was favoured with many critical suggestions and amendments ; to one of which only he attended. Blair, reading over with him, or hearing him recite (which he delighted at all times in doing) his *Holy Fair,* stopped him at the stanza—

> Now a' the congregation o'er
> Is silent expectation,
> For Russel speels the holy door
> Wi' tidings o' *Salvation.*—

Nay, said the Doctor, read *damnation.* Burns improved the wit of this verse, undoubtedly, by adopting the emendation; but he gave another strange specimen of want of *tact,* when he insisted that Dr. Blair, one of the most scrupulous observers of clerical propriety, should permit him to acknowledge the obligation in a note.

But to pass from these trifles, it needs no effort of imagination to conceive what the sensations of an isolated set of scholars (almost all either clergymen or professors) must have been in the presence of this big-boned, black-browed, brawny stranger, with his great flashing eyes, who, having forced his way among them from the plough-tail at a single stride, mani-

fested, in the whole strain of his bearing and conversation, a most thorough conviction, that, in the society of the most eminent men of his nation, he was exactly where he was entitled to be; hardly deigned to flatter them by exhibiting even an occasional symptom of being flattered by their notice; by turns calmly measured himself against the most cultivated understandings of his time in discussion; overpowered the *bon mots* of the most celebrated convivialists by broad floods of merriment, impregnated with all the burning life of genius; astounded bosoms habitually enveloped in the thrice-piled folds of social reserve, by compelling them to tremble—nay to tremble visibly—beneath the fearless touch of natural pathos; and all this without indicating the smallest willingness to be ranked among those professional ministers of excitement, who are content to be paid in money and smiles for doing what the spectators and auditors would be ashamed of doing in their own persons, even if they had the power of doing it; and,—last and probably worst of all,—who was known to be in the habit of enlivening societies which they would have scorned to approach, still more frequently than their own, with eloquence no less magnificent; with wit in all likelihood still more daring; often enough, as the superiors whom he fronted without alarm might have guessed from the beginning, and had, ere long, no occasion to guess, with wit pointed at themselves.

The lawyers of Edinburgh, in whose wider circles Burns figured at his outset, with at least as much success as among the professional literati, were a very different race of men from these; they would neither, I take it, have pardoned rudeness, nor been alarmed by wit. But being, in those days, with scarcely an exception, members of the landed aristocracy of the country, and forming by far the most influential body (as indeed they still do) in the society of Scotland, they were, perhaps, as proud a set of men as ever enjoyed the tranquil pleasures of unquestioned superiority. What their haughtiness, as a body, was, may be guessed, when we know that inferior birth was reckoned a fair and legitimate ground for excluding any man from the bar. In one remarkable instance, about this very time, a man of very extraordinary talents and accomplishments was chiefly opposed in a long and painful struggle for admission, and, in reality, for no reasons but those I have been alluding to, by gentlemen who in the sequel stood at the very head of the Whig party in Edinburgh;* and the same aristocratical prejudice has, within the memory of the present generation, kept more persons of eminent qualifications in the background, for a season, than any English reader would easily believe. To this body belonged nineteen out of twenty of those "patricians," whose stateliness Burns so long remembered and so bitterly resented. It might, perhaps, have been well for him had stateliness been the worst fault of their manners. Wine-bibbing appears to be in most regions a favourite indulgence with those whose brains and lungs are subjected to the severe exercises of legal study and forensic practice. To this day, more traces of these old habits linger about the inns of court than in any other section of London. In Dublin and Edinburgh, the barristers are even now eminently convival bodies of men; but among the Scotch lawyers of the time of Burns, the principle of jollity was indeed in its "high and palmy state." He partook largely in those tavern scenes of audacious hilarity, which then soothed, as a matter

* Mr. John Wild, son of a Tobacconist in the High Street, Edinburgh. He came to be Professor of Civil law in that University; but, in the end, was also an instance of unhappy genius.

of course, the arid labours of the northern *noblesse de la robe*. The tavern-life is now-a-days nearly extinct every where; but it was then in full vigour in Edinburgh, and there can be no doubt that Burns rapidly familiarized himself with it during his residence. He had, after all, tasted but rarely of such excesses while in Ayrshire. So little are we to consider his *Scotch Drink*, and other jovial strains of the early period, as conveying any thing like a fair notion of his actual course of life, that "Auld Nanse Tinnock," or "Poosie Nancie," the Mauchline landlady, is known to have expressed, amusingly enough, her surprise at the style in which she found her name celebrated in the Kilmarnock edition, saying, "that Robert Burns might be a very clever lad, but he certainly was *regardless*, as, to the best of her belief, he had never taken three half-mutchkins in her house in all his life." And in addition to Gilbert's testimony to the same purpose, we have on record that of Mr. Archibald Bruce, a gentleman of great worth and discernment, that he had observed Burns closely during that period of his life, and seen him "steadily resist such solicitations and allurements to excessive convivial enjoyment, as hardly any other person could have withstood."—The unfortunate Heron knew Burns well; and himself mingled largely in some of the scenes to which he adverts in the following strong language:—"The enticements of pleasure too often unman our virtuous resolution, even while we wear the air of rejecting them with a stern brow. We resist, and resist, and resist; but, at last, suddenly turn, and passionately embrace the enchantress. The *bucks* of Edinburgh accomplished, in regard to Burns, that in which the *boors* of Ayrshire had failed. After residing some months in Edinburgh, he began to estrange himself, not altogether, but in some measure, from graver friends. Too many of his hours were now spent at the tables of persons who delighted to urge conviviality to drunkenness—in the tavern—and in the brothel." It would be idle *now* to attempt passing over these things in silence; but it could serve no good purpose to dwell on them. During this *winter*, Burns continued to lodge with John Richmond, indeed, to share his bed; and we have the authority of this, one of the earliest and kindest friends of the poet, for the statement, that while he did so, "he kept good hours." He removed afterwards to the house of Mr. William Nicoll, one of the teachers of the High School of Edinburgh. Nicoll was a man of quick parts and considerable learning—who had risen from a rank as humble as Burns's: from the beginning an enthusiastic admirer, and, ere long, a constant associate of the poet, and a most dangerous associate; for, with a warm heart, the man united an irascible temper, a contempt of the religious institutions of his country, and an occasional propensity for the bottle. Of Nicoll's letters to Burns, and about him, I have seen many that have never been, and probably that never will be, printed—cumbrous and pedantic effusions, exhibiting nothing that one can imagine to have been pleasing to the poet, except a rapturous admiration of his genius. This man, nevertheless, was, I suspect, very far from being an unfavourable specimen of the society to which Heron thus alludes:—"He (the poet) *suffered* himself to be surrounded by a race of miserable beings, who were proud to tell that they had been in company with Burns, and had seen Burns as loose and as foolish as themselves. He was not yet irrecoverably lost to temperance and moderation; but he was already almost too much captivated with their wanton revels, to be ever more won back to a faithful attachment to *their* more sober charms." Heron adds—"He now also began to contract some-

thing of new arrogance in conversation. Accustomed to be, among his favourite associates, what is vulgarly, but expressively called, the cock of the company, he could scarcely refrain from indulging in similar freedom and dictatorial decision of talk, even in the presence of persons who could less patiently endure his presumption;" * an account *ex facie* probable, and which sufficiently tallies with some hints in Mr. Dugald Stewart's description of the poet's manners, as he first observed him at Catrine, and with one or two anecdotes already cited from Walker and Cromek.

Of these failings, and indeed of all Burns's failings, it may be safely asserted, that there was more in his history to account and apologize for them, than can be alleged in regard to almost any other great man's imperfections. We have seen, how, even in his earliest days, the strong thirst of distinction glowed within him—how in his first and rudest rhymes he sung,

"——— to be great is charming;"

and we have also seen, that the display of talent in conversation was the first means of distinction that occurred to him. It was by that talent that he first attracted notice among his fellow peasants, and after he mingled with the first Scotsmen of his time, this talent was still that which appeared the most astonishing of all he possessed. What wonder that he should delight in exerting it where he could exert it the most freely—where there was no check upon a tongue that had been accustomed to revel in the license of village-mastery? where every sally, however bold, was sure to be received with triumphant applause—where there were no claims to rival his—no proud brows to convey rebuke, above all, perhaps, no grave eyes to convey regret?

But these, assuredly, were not the only feelings that influenced Burns: In his own letters, written during his stay in Edinburgh, we have the best evidence to the contrary. He shrewdly suspected, from the very beginning, that the personal notice of the great and the illustrious was not to be as lasting as it was eager: he foresaw, that sooner or later he was destined to revert to societies less elevated above the pretensions of his birth; and, though his jealous pride might induce him to record his suspicions in language rather too strong than too weak, it is quite impossible to read what he wrote without believing that a sincere distrust lay rankling at the roots of his heart, all the while that he appeared to be surrounded with an atmosphere of joy and hope. On the 15th of January 1787, we find him thus addressing his kind patroness, Mrs. Dunlop:—"You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet. Alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserved some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity, and crude unpolished ideas, on my head,—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble, when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least

* Heron, p. 28.

at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice, which has borne me to a height where I am absolutely, feelingly certain, my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time, when the same tide will leave me, and recede perhaps as far below the mark of truth. . . . I mention this once for all, to disburden my mind, and I do not wish to hear or say any more about it. But—'When proud fortune's ebbing tide recedes,' you will bear me witness, that when my bubble of fame was at the highest, I stood unintoxicated with the inebriating cup in my hand, looking forward with rueful resolve."—And about the same time, to Dr. Moore:—"The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever-changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities; and as few, if any writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. . . . . I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit, I do not deny; but I see, with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities."—And lastly, April the 23d, 1787, we have the following passage in a letter also to Dr. Moore:—"I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight. I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles."

One word more on the subject which introduced these quotations:—Mr. Dugald Stewart, no doubt, hints at what was a common enough complaint among the elegant literati of Edinburgh, when he alludes, in his letter to Currie, to the "not very select society" in which Burns indulged himself. But two points still remain somewhat doubtful; namely, whether, show and marvel of the season as he was, the "Ayrshire ploughman" really had it in his power to live *always* in society which Mr. Stewart would have considered as "very select;" and secondly, whether, in so doing, he could have failed to chill the affection of those humble Ayrshire friends, who, having shared with him all that they possessed on his first arrival in the metropolis, faithfully and fondly adhered to him, after the springtide of fashionable favour did, as he foresaw it would do, "recede;" and, moreover, perhaps to provoke, among the higher circles themselves, criticisms more distasteful to his proud stomach, than any probable consequences of the course of conduct which he actually pursued. The second edition of Burns's poems was published early in March, by Creech; there were no less than 1500 subscribers, many of whom paid more than the shop-price of the volume. Although, therefore, the final settlement with the bookseller did not take place till nearly a year after, Burns now found himself in possession of a considerable sum of ready money; and the first impulse of his mind was to visit some of the classic scenes of Scottish history and romance. He had as yet seen but a small part of his own country, and this by no means among the most interesting of her districts, until, indeed, his own poetry made it equal, on that score, to any other.—"The appellation of a Scottish

bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it, is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes, and Scottish story, are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which, Heaven knows, I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles, to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers, and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes. But these are Utopian views." *

The magnificent scenery of the capital itself had filled him with extraordinary delight. In the spring mornings, he walked very often to the top of Arthur's Seat, and, lying prostrate on the turf, surveyed the rising of the sun out of the sea, in silent admiration; his chosen companion on such occasions being that ardent lover of nature, and learned artist, Mr. Alexander Nasmyth. It was to this gentleman, equally devoted to the fine arts, as to liberal opinions, that Burns sat for the portrait engraved to Creech's edition, and which is here repeated. Indeed, it has been so often repeated, and has become so familiar, that to omit it now would be felt as a blank equal almost to the leaving out of one of the principal poems. The poet's dress has also been chronicled, remarkably as he then appeared in the first heyday of his reputation,—blue coat and buff vest, with blue stripes, (the Whig-livery), very tight buckskin breeches, and tight jockey boots.

The Braid hills, to the south of Edinburgh, were also among his favourite morning walks; and it was in some of these that Mr. Dugald Stewart tells us, "he charmed him still more by his private conversation than he had ever done in company." "He was," adds the professor, "passionately fond of the beauties of nature, and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained." Burns was far too busy with society and observation to find time for poetical composition, during his first residence in Edinburgh. Creech's edition included some pieces of great merit, which had not been previously printed; but, with the exception of the *Address to Edinburgh*, all of them appear to have been written before he left Ayrshire. Several of them, indeed, were very early productions: The most important additions were, *Death and Doctor Hornbook*, *The Brigs of Ayr*, *The Ordination*, and the *Address to the unco Guid*. In this edition also, *When Guildford guid our pilot stood*, made its first appearance.

The evening before he quitted Edinburgh, the poet addressed a letter to Dr. Blair, in which, taking a most respectful farewell of him, and expressing, in lively terms, his sense of gratitude for the kindness he had shown him, he thus recurs to his own views of his own past and future condition: "I have often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation. However the metor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, I knew very well, that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character when once the novelty was over. I have made up my mind, that abuse, or almost even neglect, will not surprise me in my quarters."

It ought not to be omitted, that our poet bestowed some of the first fruits of Creech's edition in the erection of a decent tombstone over the hitherto

* Letter to Mrs. Dunlop, Edinburgh, 22d March 1787.

neglected remains of his unfortunate predecessor, Robert Ferguson, in the Canongate churchyard. It seems also due to him here to insert his Address to Edinburgh,—so graphic and comprehensive,—as the proper record of the feelings engendered in his susceptible and grateful mind by the kindness shown to him, in his long visit, and under which feelings he was now about to quit it for a time.

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

EDINA! *Scotia's* darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sovereign pow'rs!
From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
As on the banks of *Ayr* I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the lingering hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy trade his labours plies;
There architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise;
Here justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod;
There learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks science in her coy abode.

Thy sons, EDINA, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail;
Their views enlarged, their liberal mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale;
Attentive still to sorrow's wail,
Or modest merit's silent claim;
And never may their sources fail!
And never envy blot their name.

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn!
Gay as the gilded summer's sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptured thrill of joy!
Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heav'n's beauties on my fancy shine:
I see the *sire of love on high*,
And own his work indeed divine!

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough rude fortress gleams afar:
Like some bold vet'ran grey in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar:
The pon'drous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock:
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd th' invader's shock.

With awe-struck thought and pitying tears
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where *Scotia's* kings of other years,
Famed heroes, had their royal home.
Alas! how changed the times to come!
Their royal name low in the dust;
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam!
Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just!

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors in days of yore,
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old *Scotia's* bloody lion bore:
E'en *I* who sing in rustic lore,
Haply *my sires* have left their shed,
And faced grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold following where *your* fathers led!

EDINA! *Scotia's* darling seat!
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sov'reign pow'rs!
From marking wildly-scatter'd flowers,
As on the banks of *Ayr* I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

CHAPTER VI.

CONTENTS.—*Makes three several pilgrimages in Caledonia—Lands from the first of them, after an absence of six months, amongst his friends in the "Auld Clay Biggin"—Finds honour in his own country—Falls in with many kind friends during those pilgrimages, and is familiar with the great, but never secures* one *effective patron—Anecdotes and Sketches—Lingers in Edinburgh amidst the fleshpots, winter* 1787-8—*Upset in a hackney coach, which produces a bruised limb, and mournful musings for six weeks—Is enrolled in the Excise—Another crisis, in which the Poet finds it necessary to implore even his friend Mrs. Dunlop not to desert him—Growls over his publisher, but after settling with him leaves Edinburgh with £500—Steps towards a more regular life.*

"Ramsay and famous Ferguson,
Gied Forth and Tay a lift aboon;
Yarrow and Tweed to monie a tune
Thro' Scotland rings,
While Irvine, Lugar, Ayr, and Doon,
Naebody sings."

ON the 6th of May, Burns left Edinburgh, in company with Mr. Robert Ainslie, Writer to the Signet, the son of a proprietor in Berwickshire.—Among other changes "which fleeting time procureth," this amiable gentleman, whose youthful gaiety made him a chosen associate of Burns, is now chiefly known as the author of some Manuals of Devotion.—They had formed the design of perambulating the picturesque scenery of the southern border, and in particular of visiting the localities celebrated by the old minstrels, of whose works Burns was a passionate admirer.

This was long before the time when those fields of Scottish romance were to be made accessible to the curiosity of citizens by stage-coaches; and Burns and his friend performed their tour on horseback; the former being mounted on a favourite mare, whom he had named Jenny Geddes, in honour of the good woman who threw her stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head on the 23d of July 1637, when the attempt was made to introduce a Scottish *Liturgy* into the service of St. Giles's. The merits of the trusty animal have been set forth by the poet in very expressive and humorous terms, in a letter to his friend Nicoll while on the road, and which will be found entire in the Correspondence. He writes:—"My auld ga'd gleyde o' a meere has huchyalled up hill and down brae, as teuch and birnie as a vera devil, wi' me. It's true she's as puir's a sangmaker, and as hard's a kirk, and lipper-laipers when she takes the gate, like a lady's gentlewoman in a minuwae, or a hen on a het girdle; but she's a yauld poutherin girran for a' that. When ance her ringbanes and pavies, her cruiks and cramps, are fairly soupled, she beets to, beets to, and aye the hindmost hour the lightest," &c. &c.

Burns passed from Edinburgh to Berrywell, the residence of Mr. Ainslie's family, and visited successively Dunse, Coldstream, Kelso, Fleurs, and the ruins of Roxburgh Castle, near which a holly bush still marks the spot on

which James II. of Scotland was killed by the bursting of a cannon. Jedburgh —where he admired the "charming romantic situation of the town, with gardens and orchards intermingled among the houses of a once magnificent cathedral (abbey);" and was struck, (as in the other towns of the same district), with the appearance of "old rude grandure," and the idleness of decay; Melrose, "that far-famed glorious ruin," Selkirk, Ettrick, and the braes of Yarrow. Having spent three weeks in this district, of which it has been justly said, "that every field has its battle, and every rivulet its song," Burns passed the Border, and visited Alnwick, Warkworth, Morpeth, Newcastle, Hexham, Wardrue, and Carlisle. He then turned northwards, and rode by Annan and Dumfries to Dalswinton, where he examined Mr. Miller's property, and was so much pleased with the soil, and the terms on which the landlord was willing to grant him a lease, that he resolved to return again in the course of the summer.

The poet visited, in the course of his tour, Sir James Hall of Dunglas, author of the well known *Essay on Gothic Architecture*, &c.; Sir Alexander and Lady Harriet Don, (sister to his patron, Lord Glencairn), at Newton-Don; Mr. Brydone, the author of *Travels in Sicily;* the amiable and learned Dr. Somerville of Jedburgh, the historian of Queen Anne, &c.; and, as usual, recorded in his journal his impressions as to their manners and characters. His reception was everywhere most flattering. The sketch of his tour is a very brief one. It runs thus:—

"*Saturday, May* 6. Left Edinburgh—Lammer-muir hills, miserably dreary in general, but at times very picturesque.

"Lanson-edge, a glorious view of the Merse. Reach Berrywell. . . The family-meeting with my *compagnon de voyage*, very charming; particularly the sister.

"*Sunday.* Went to church at Dunse. Heard Dr. Bowmaker.

"*Monday.* Coldstream—glorious river Tweed—clear and majestic—fine bridge—dine at Coldstream with Mr. Ainslie and Mr. Foreman. Beat Mr. Foreman in a dispute about Voltaire. Drink tea at Lennel-House with Mr. and Mrs. Brydone. . . . Reception extremely flattering. Sleep at Coldstream.

"*Tuesday.* Breakfast at Kelso—charming situation of the town—fine bridge over the Tweed. Enchanting views and prospects on both sides of the river, especially on the Scotch side. . . . Visit Roxburgh Palace —fine situation of it. Ruins of Roxburgh Castle—a holly bush growing where James the Second was accidentally killed by the bursting of a cannon. A small old religious ruin and a fine old garden planted by the religious, rooted out and destroyed by a Hottentot, *a maitre d' hotel* of the Duke's!—Climate and soil of Berwickshire, and even Roxburghshire, superior to Ayrshire—bad roads—turnip and sheep husbandry, their great improvements. . . . Low markets, consequently low lands—magnificence of farmers and farm-houses. Come up the Teviot, and up the Jed to Jedburgh, to lie, and so wish myself good night.

"*Wednesday.* Breakfast with Mr. Fair. . . . Charming romantic situation of Jedburgh, with gardens and orchards, intermingled among the houses and the ruins of a once magnificent cathedral. All the towns here have the appearance of old rude grandeur, but extremely idle.—Jed, a fine romantic little river. Dined with Capt. Rutherford, . . . return to Jedburgh. Walked up the Jed with some ladies to be shown Love-lane, and Blackburn, two fairy scenes. Introduced to Mr. Potts, writer, and to

Mr. Somerville, the clergyman of the parish, a man, and a gentleman, but sadly addicted to punning.

. . . . . ,

"*Jedburgh, Saturday.* Was presented by the Magistrates with the freedom of the town. Took farewell of Jedburgh, with some melancholy sensations.

"*Monday, May* 14, *Kelso.* Dine with the farmer's club—all gentlemen talking of high matters—each of them keeps a hunter from £30 to £50 value, and attends the fox-hunting club in the country. Go out with Mr. Ker, one of the club, and a friend of Mr. Ainslie's, to sleep. In his mind and manners, Mr. Ker is astonishingly like my dear old friend Robert Muir —Every thing in his house elegant. He offers to accompany me in my English tour.

"*Tuesday.* Dine with Sir Alexander Don; a very wet day. . . . Sleep at Mr. Ker's again, and set out next day for Melrose—visit Dryburgh, a fine old ruined abbey, by the way. Cross the Leader, and come up the Tweed to Melrose. Dine there, and visit that far-famed glorious ruin— Come to Selkirk up the banks of Ettrick. The whole country hereabouts, both on Tweed and Ettrick, remarkably stony."

He wrote no verses, as far as is known, during this tour, except a humorous Epistle to his bookseller, Creech, dated Selkirk, 13th May. In this he makes complimentary allusions to some of the men of letters who were used to meet at breakfast in Creech's apartments in those days—whence the name of *Creech's Levee;* and touches, too, briefly on some of the scenery he had visited.

> "Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
> And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
> And Ettrick banks now roaring red,
> While tempests blaw."——

Burns returned to Mauchline on the 8th of July. It is pleasing to imagine the delight with which he must have been received by the family after the absence of six months, in which his fortunes and prospects had undergone so wonderful a change. He left them comparatively unknown, his tenderest feelings torn and wounded by the behaviour of the Armours, and so miserably poor, that he had been for some weeks obliged to skulk from the Sheriff's officers, to avoid the payment of a paltry debt. He returned, his poetical fame established, the whole country ringing with his praises, from a capital in which he was known to have formed the wonder and delight of the polite and the learned; if not rich, yet with more money already than any of his kindred had ever hoped to see him possess, and with prospects of future patronage and permanent elevation in the scale of society, which might have dazzled steadier eyes than those of maternal and fraternal affection. The prophet had at last honour in his own country: but the haughty spirit that had preserved its balance in Edinburgh, was not likely to lose it at Mauchline; and we have him writing from *the auld clay biggin* on the 18th of June, in terms as strongly expressive as any that ever came from his pen, of that jealous pride which formed the groundwork of his character; that dark suspiciousness of fortune, which the subsequent course of his history too well justified; that nervous intolerance of condescension, and consummate scorn of meanness, which attended him through life, and made the study of his species, for which nature had given him such extraordinary qualifications, the source of more pain than was

ever counterbalanced by the exquisite capacity for enjoyment with which he was also endowed. There are few of his letters in which more of the dark traits of his spirit come to light than in the following extract:—"I never, my friend, thought mankind capable of any thing very generous; but the stateliness of the patricians of Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren, (who, perhaps, formerly eyed me askance), since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket-Milton, which I carry perpetually about me, in order to study the sentiments, the dauntless magnanimity, the intrepid unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage—Satan. . . . The many ties of acquaintance and friendship I have, or think I have, in life—I have felt along the lines, and, d—n them, they are almost all of them of such frail texture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune."

Among those who now appeared sufficiently ready to court his society, were the family of Jean Armour. Burns's regard for this affectionate young woman had outlived his resentment of her father's disavowal of him in the preceding summer; and from the time of this reconciliation, it is probable he looked forward to a permanent union with the mother of his children.

Burns at least fancied himself to be busy with serious plans for his future establishment; and was very naturally disposed to avail himself, as far as he could, of the opportunities of travel and observation, which an interval of leisure might present. Moreover, in spite of his gloomy language, a specimen of which has just been quoted, we are not to doubt that he derived much pleasure from witnessing the extensive popularity of his writings, and from the flattering homage he was sure to receive in his own person in the various districts of his native country; nor can any one wonder that, after the state of high excitement in which he had spent the winter and spring, he, fond as he was of his family, and eager to make them partakers in all his good fortune, should have, just at this time, found himself incapable of sitting down contentedly for any considerable period together, in so humble and quiet a circle as that of Mossgiel. His appetite for wandering appears to have been only sharpened by his Border excursion. After remaining a few days at home, he returned to Edinburgh, and thence proceeded on another short tour, by way of Stirling, to Inverary, and so back again, by Dumbarton and Glasgow, to Mauchline. Of this second excursion, no journal has been discovered; nor do the extracts from his correspondence, printed by Dr. Currie, appear to be worthy of much notice. In one, he briefly describes the West Highlands as a country "where savage streams tumble over savage mountains, thinly overspread with savage flocks, which starvingly support as savage inhabitants:" and in another, he gives an account of Jenny Geddes running a race *after dinner* with a Highlander's pony—of his dancing and drinking till sunrise at a gentleman's house on Loch Lomond; and of other similar matters.—"I have as yet," says he, "fixed on nothing with respect to the serious business of life. I am, just as usual, a rhyming, mason-making, raking, aimless, idle fellow. However, I shall somewhere have a farm soon."

In the course of this tour, Burns visited the mother and sisters of his friend, Gavin Hamilton, then residing at Harvieston, in Clackmannanshire, in the immediate neighbourhood of the magnificent scenery of Castle Campbell, and the vale of Devon. Castle Campbell, called otherwise the *Castle*

of Gloom, is grandly situated in a gorge of the Ochills, commanding an extensive view of the plain of Stirling. This ancient possession of the Argyll family was, in some sort, a town-residence of those chieftains in the days when the court was usually held at Stirling, Linlithgow, or Falkland. The castle was burnt by Montrose, and has never been repaired. The *Cauldron Linn* and *Rumbling Brigg* of the Devon lie near Castle Campbell, on the verge of the plain. He was especially delighted with one of the young ladies; and, according to his usual custom, celebrated her in a song, in which, in opposition to his general custom, there is nothing but the respectfulness of admiration.

How pleasant the banks of the clear-winding Devon,
With green spreading bushes, and flowers blooming fair;
But the bonniest flower on the banks of the Devon
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr.

Mild be the sun on this sweet blushing flower,
In the gay rosy morn as it bathes in the dew!
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal shower,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew.

O spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill hoary wing as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seizes
The verdure and pride of the garden and lawn!

Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud rose;
A fairer than either adorns the green valleys,
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

At Harviestonbank, also, the poet first became acquainted with Miss Chalmers, afterwards Mrs. Hay, to whom one of the most interesting series of his letters is addressed. Indeed, with the exception of his letters to Mrs. Dunlop, there is, perhaps, no part of his correspondence which may be quoted so uniformly to his honour. It was on this expedition that, having been visited with a high flow of Jacobite indignation while viewing the neglected palace at Stirling, he was imprudent enough to write some verses bitterly vituperative of the reigning family on the window of his inn. These verses were copied and talked of; and although the next time Burns passed through Stirling, he himself broke the pane of glass containing them, they were remembered years afterwards to his disadvantage, and even danger.—As these verses have never appeared in any edition of his works hitherto published in Britain, we present them to our readers as a literary curiosity.

Here once in triumph Stuarts reign'd,
And laws for Scotia well ordain'd;
But now unroof'd their palace stands;
Their sceptre's sway'd by other hands.

The injured Stuart line is gone,
A race outlandish fills the throne;—
An idiot race, to honour lost,
Who know them best, despise them most.

The young ladies of Harvieston were, according to Dr. Currie, surprised with the calm manner in which Burns contemplated their fine scenery on Devon water; and the Doctor enters into a little dissertation on the subject, showing that a man of Burns's lively imagination might probably have formed anticipations which the realities of the prospect might rather disappoint.

This is possible enough; but I suppose few will take it for granted that Burns surveyed any scenes either of beauty or of grandeur without emotion, merely because he did not choose to be ecstatic for the benefit of a company of young ladies. He was indeed very impatient of interruption on such occasions: riding one dark night near Carron, his companion teased him with noisy exclamations of delight and wonder, whenever an opening in the wood permitted them to see the magnificent glare of the furnaces; "Look, Burns! Good Heaven! look! look! what a glorious sight!"—"Sir," said Burns, clapping spurs to Jenny Geddes, "I would not *look! look!* at your bidding, if it were the mouth of hell!"

Burns spent the month of July at Mossgiel; and Mr. Dugald Stewart, in a letter to Currie, gives some recollections of him as he then appeared: —"Notwithstanding the various reports I heard during the preceding winter of Burns's predilection for convivial, and not very select society, I should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety, from all of him that ever fell under my own observation. He told me indeed himself, that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him entirely of any merit in his temperance. I was, however, somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me, the first night he spent in my house after his winter's campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed, by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject. In the course of the same season I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a Masonic Lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and every thing he said was happily conceived, and forcibly as well as fluently expressed. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution."

In August, Burns revisited Stirlingshire, in company with Dr. Adair, of Harrowgate, and remained ten days at Harvieston. He was received with particular kindness at Ochtertyre, on the Teith, by Mr. Ramsay (a friend of Blacklock), whose beautiful retreat he enthusiastically admired. His host was among the last of those old Scottish *Latinists* who began with Buchanan. Mr. Ramsay, among other eccentricities, had sprinkled the walls of his house with Latin inscriptions, some of them highly elegant; and these particularly interested Burns, who asked and obtained copies and translations of them. This amiable man (another Monkbarns) was deeply read in Scottish antiquities, and the author of some learned essays on the elder poetry of his country. His conversation must have delighted any man of talents; and Burns and he were mutually charmed with each other. Ramsay advised him strongly to turn his attention to the romantic drama, and proposed the *Gentle Shepherd* as a model: he also urged him to write *Scottish Georgics*, observing that Thomson had by no means exhausted that field. He appears to have relished both hints. "But," says Mr. R. "to have executed either plan, steadiness and abstraction from company were wanting."—Mr. Ramsay thus writes of Burns:—"I have been in the company of many men of genius, some of them poets; but I never witnessed such flashes of intellectual brightness as from him, the impulse of the moment, sparks of celestial fire. I never was more delighted, therefore, than with his company two days tête-a-tête. In a mixed company I should have made little of him; for, to use a gamester's phrase, he did not always know

when to play off and when to play on. When I asked him whether the Edinburgh literati had mended his poems by their criticisms—' Sir,' said he, ' those gentlemen remind me of some spinsters in my country, who spin their thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof.' "

At Clackmannan Tower, the Poet's jacobitism procured him a hearty welcome from the ancient lady of the place, who gloried in considering herself a lineal descendant of Robert Bruce. She bestowed on Burns knighthood with the touch of the hero's sword; and delighted him by giving as her toast after dinner, *Hooki uncos,* away strangers!—a shepherd's cry when strange sheep mingle in the flock. At Dunfermline the poet betrayed deep emotion, Dr. Adair tells us, on seeing the grave of the Bruce; but, passing to another mood on entering the adjoining church, he mounted the pulpit, and addressed his companions, who had, at his desire, ascended the *cuttystool,* in a parody of the rebuke which he had himself undergone some time before at Mauchline. From Dunfermline the poet crossed the Frith of Forth to Edinburgh; and forthwith set out with his friend Nicoll on a more extensive tour than he had as yet undertaken, or was ever again to undertake. Some fragments of his journal have recently been discovered, and are now in my hands; so that I may hope to add some interesting particulars to the accout of Dr. Currie. The travellers hired a post-chaise for their expedition—the schoolmaster being, probably, no very skilful equestrian.

" *August 25th,* 1787.—This day," says Burns, " I leave Edinburgh for a tour, in company with my good friend, Mr. Nicoll, whose originality of humour promises me much entertainment.—*Linlithgow.*—A fertile improved country is West Lothian. The more elegance and luxury among the farmers, I always observe, in equal proportion, the rudeness and stupidity of the peasantry. This remark I have made all over the Lothians, Merse, Roxburgh, &c.; and for this, among other reasons, I think that a man of romantic taste, ' a man of feeling,' will be better pleased with the poverty, but intelligent minds of the peasantry of Ayrshire, (peasantry they are all, below the Justice of Peace), than the opulence of a club of Merse farmers, when he, at the same time, considers the Vandalism of their ploughfolks, &c. I carry this idea so far, that an uninclosed, unimproved country is to me actually more agreeable as a prospect, than a country cultivated like a garden."

It was hardly to be expected that Robert Burns should have estimated the wealth of nations on the principles of a political economist; or that with him the greatest possible produce,—no matter how derived,—was to be the paramount principle. But, where the greatness and happiness of a people are concerned, perhaps the inspirations of the poet may be as safely taken for a guide as the inductions of the political economist:—

From scenes like these old *Scotia's* grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad:
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
" An honest man's the noblest work of GOD!"
And *certes,* in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The *cottage* leaves the *palace* far behind;
What is a lordling's pomp! a cumbrous load.
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined;
O *Scotia!* my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!

And, O! may Heav'n their simple lives prevent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er *crowns* and *coronets* be rent,
A *virtuous populace* may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved *Isle.*

Of Linlithgow the poet says, "the town carries the appearance of rude, decayed, idle grandeur—charmingly rural retired situation—the old Royal Palace a tolerably fine but melancholy ruin—sweetly situated by the brink of a loch. Shown the room where the beautiful injured Mary Queen of Scots was born. A pretty good old Gothic church—the infamous stool of repentance, in the old Romish way, on a lofty situation. What a poor pimping business is a Presbyterian place of worship; dirty, narrow, and squalid, stuck in a corner of old Popish grandeur, such as Linlithgow, and much more Melrose! Ceremony and show, if judiciously thrown in, are absolutely necessary for the bulk of mankind, both in religious and civil matters——"

At Bannockburn he writes as follows:—"Here no Scot can pass uninterested. I fancy to myself that I see my gallant countrymen coming over the hill, and down upon the plunderers of their country, the murderers of their fathers, noble revenge and just hate glowing in every vein, striding more and more eagerly as they approach the oppressive, insulting, bloodthirsty foe. I see them meet in glorious triumphant congratulation on the victorious field, exulting in their heroic royal leader, and rescued liberty and independence."—Here we have the germ of Burns's famous ode on the battle of Bannockburn.

At Taymouth, the Journal merely has—"*described in rhyme.*" This alludes to the "verses written with a pencil over the mantle-piece of the parlour in the inn at Kenmore;" some of which are among his best purely English heroics—

"Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wandering by the hermit's mossy cell;
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
The incessant roar of headlong-tumbling floods . . . .
Here Poesy might wake her heaven-taught lyre,
And look through nature with creative fire . . . .
Here, to the wrongs of fate half reconciled,
Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
And Disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds;
Here heart-struck Grief might heavenward stretch her scan,
And injured Worth forget and pardon man."

Of Glenlyon we have this memorandum:—"Druids' temple, three circles of stones, the outermost sunk, the second has thirteen stones remaining, the innermost eight; two large detached ones like a gate to the south-east—*say prayers on it.*"

His notes on Dunkeld and Blair of Athole are as follows:—"*Dunkeld*—Breakfast with Dr. Stuart—Neil Gow plays; a short, stout-built, Highland figure, with his greyish hair shed on his honest social brow—an interesting face, marking strong sense, kind openheartedness mixed with unmistrusting simplicity—visit his house—Margaret Gow.—*Friday*—ride up Tummel river to Blair. Fascally, a beautiful romantic nest—wild grandeur of the pass of Killikrankie—visit the gallant Lord Dundee's stone.—*Blair*—sup with the Duchess—easy and happy from the manners of that family—confirmed in my good opinion of my friend Walker.—*Saturday*—visit the scenes round Blair—fine, but spoilt with bad taste."

Mr. Walker, who, as we have seen, formed Burns's acquaintance in Edinburgh through Blacklock, was at this period tutor in the family of Athole, and from him the following particulars of Burns's reception at the seat of his noble patron are derived:—"On reaching Blair, he sent me notice of his arrival (as I had been previously acquainted with him), and I hastened to meet him at the inn. The Duke, to whom he brought a letter of introduction, was from home; but the Duchess, being informed of his arrival, gave him an invitation to sup and sleep at Athole House. He accepted the invitation; but, as the hour of supper was at some distance, begged I would in the interval be his guide through the grounds. It was already growing dark; yet the softened, though faint and uncertain, view of their beauties, which the moonlight afforded us, seemed exactly suited to the state of his feelings at the time. I had often, like others, experienced the pleasures which arise from the sublime or elegant landscape, but I never saw those feelings so intense as in Burns. When we reached a rustic hut on the river Tilt, where it is overhung by a woody precipice, from which there is a noble water-fall, he threw himself on the heathy seat, and gave himself up to a tender, abstracted, and voluptuous enthusiasm of imagination. It was with much difficulty I prevailed on him to quit this spot, and to be introduced in proper time to supper. My curiosity was great to see how he would conduct himself in company so different from what he had been accustomed to. His manner was unembarrassed, plain, and firm. He appeared to have complete reliance on his own native good sense for directing his behaviour. He seemed at once to perceive and to appreciate what was due to the company and to himself, and never to forget a proper respect for the separate species of dignity belonging to each. He did not arrogate conversation, but, when led into it, he spoke with ease, propriety, and manliness. He tried to exert his abilities, because he knew it was ability alone gave him a title to be there. The Duke's fine young family attracted much of his admiration; he drank their healths as *honest men and bonnie lasses*, an idea which was much applauded by the company, and with which he has very felicitously closed his poem. Next day I took a ride with him through some of the most romantic parts of that neighbourhood, and was highly gratified by his conversation. As a specimen of his happiness of conception and strength of expression, I will mention a remark which he made on his fellow-traveller, who was walking at the time a few paces before us. He was a man of a robust but clumsy person; and while Burns was expressing to me the value he entertained for him, on account of his vigorous talents, although they were clouded at times by coarseness of manners; "in short," he added, "his mind is like his body, he has a confounded strong in-knee'd sort of a soul."—Much attention was paid to Burns both before and after the Duke's return, of which he was perfectly sensible, without being vain; and at his departure I recommended to him, as the most appropriate return he could make, to write some descriptive verses on any of the scenes with which he had been so much delighted. After leaving Blair, he, by the Duke's advice, visited the *Falls of Bruar*, and in a few days I received a letter from Inverness, with the verses enclosed." *

At Blair, Burns first met with Mr. Graham of Fintray, a gentleman to whose kindness he was afterwards indebted on more than one important

* Extract of a letter from Mr. Walker to Mr. Cunningham, dated Perth, 24th October, 1797.

occasion; and Mr. Walker expresses great regret that he did not remain a day or two more, in which case he must have been introduced to Mr. Dundas, the first Lord Melville, who was then Treasurer of the Navy, and had the chief management of the affairs of Scotland. This statesman was but little addicted to literature; still, had such an introduction taken place, he might probably have been induced to bestow that consideration on the claims of the poet, which, in the absence of any personal acquaintance, Burns's works should have commanded at his hands.

From Blair, Burns passed "many miles through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows, and gloomy savage glens, till he crossed the Spey; and went down the stream through Strathspey, (so famous in Scottish music), Badenoch, &c. to Grant Castle, where he spent half a day with Sir James Grant; crossed the country to Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeth, where he saw the identical bed in which, *tradition says*, King Duncan was murdered; lastly, from Fort George to Inverness. From Inverness, he went along the Murray Frith to Fochabers, taking Culloden Muir and Brodie House in his way.—*Thursday*, Came over Culloden Muir—reflections on the field of battle—breakfast at Kilraick—old Mrs. Rose—sterling sense, warm heart, strong passion, honest pride—all to an uncommon degree—a true chieftain's wife, daughter of Clephane—Mrs. Rose junior, a little milder than the mother, perhaps owing to her being younger—two young ladies—Miss Rose sung two Gaelic songs—beautiful and lovely—Miss Sophy Brodie, not very beautiful, but most agreeable and amiable—both of them the gentlest, mildest, sweetest creatures on earth, and happiness be with them! Brodie House to lie—Mr. B. truly polite, but not quite the Highland cordiality.—*Friday*, Cross the Findhorn to Forres—famous stone at Forres—Mr. Brodie tells me the muir where Shakspeare lays Macbeth's witch-meeting, is still haunted—that the country folks won't pass by night.—*Elgin*—venerable ruins of the abbey, a grander effect at first glance than Melrose, but nothing near so beautiful.—Cross Spey to Fochabers—fine palace, worthy of the noble, the polite, the generous proprietor—the Duke makes me happier than ever great man did; noble, princely, yet mild, condescending, and affable—gay and kind.—The Duchess charming, witty, kind, and sensible—God bless them."*——

Burns, who had been much noticed by this noble family when in Edinburgh, happened to present himself at Gordon Castle, just at the dinner hour, and being invited to take a place at the table, did so, without for the moment adverting to the circumstance that his travelling companion had been left alone at the inn, in the adjacent village. On remembering this soon after dinner, he begged to be allowed to rejoin his friend; and the Duke of Gordon, who now for the first time learned that he was not journeying alone, immediately proposed to send an invitation to Mr Nicoll to come to the Castle. His Grace's messenger found the haughty schoolmaster striding up and down before the inn door, in a state of high wrath and indignation, at what he considered Burns's neglect, and no apologies could soften his mood. He had already ordered horses, and the poet finding that he must choose between the ducal circle and his irritable associate, at once left Gordon Castle, and repaired to the inn; whence Nicoll and he, in silence and mutual displeasure, pursued their journey along the

* Extract from Journal.

coast of the Murray Frith. The abridgment of Burns's visit at Gordon Castle, "was not only," says Mr. Walker, "a mortifying disappointment, but in all probability a serious misfortune, as a longer stay among persons of such influence, might have begot a permanent intimacy, and on their parts, an active concern for his future advancement." * But this touches on a delicate subject, which we shall not at present pause to consider.

Pursuing his journey along the coast, the poet visited successively Nairn, Forres, Aberdeen, and Stonehive; where one of his relations, James Burness, writer in Montrose, met him by appointment, and conducted him into the circle of his paternal kindred, among whom he spent two or three days. When William Burness, his father, abandoned his native district, never to revisit it, he, as he used to tell his children, took a sorrowful farewell of his brother on the summit of the last hill from which the roof of their lowly home could be descried; and the old man appears to have ever after kept up an affectionate correspondence with his family. It fell to the poet's lot to communicate his father's death to the Kincardineshire kindred, and after that he seems to have maintained the same sort of correspondence. He now formed a personal acquaintance with these good people, and in a letter to his brother Gilbert, we find him describing them in terms which show the lively interest he took in all their concerns. *

"The rest of my stages," says he, "are not worth rehearsing: warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing towns and fertile carses?" He arrived once more in Auld Reekie, on the 16th of September, having travelled about six hundred miles in two-and-twenty days—greatly extended his acquaintance with his own country, and visited some of its most classical scenery—observed something of Highland manners, which must have been as interesting as they were novel to him—and strengthened considerably among the sturdy Jacobites of the North those political opinions which he at this period avowed.

Of the few poems composed during this Highland tour, we have already mentioned two or three. While standing by the Fall of Fyers, near Loch Ness, he wrote with his pencil the vigorous couplets—

> "Among the heathy hills and rugged woods,
> The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods," &c.

When at Sir William Murray's of Ochtertyre, he celebrated Miss Murray of Lintrose, commonly called "The Flower of Sutherland," in the Song—

> "Blythe, blythe, and merry was she,
> Blythe was she but and ben," &c.

And the verses *On Scaring some Wildfowl on Loch Turit,*—

> "Why, ye tenants of the lake,
> For me your wat'ry haunts forsake," &c.

were composed while under the same roof. These last, except perhaps *Bruar Water*, are the best that he added to his collection during the wanderings of the summer. But in Burns's subsequent productions, we find many traces of the delight with which he had contemplated nature in these alpine regions.

* General Correspondence.

The poet once more visited his family at Mossgiel, and Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, ere the winter set in; and on more leisurely examination of that gentleman's estate, we find him writing as if he had all but decided to become his tenant on the farm of Elliesland. It was not, however, until he had for the third time visited Dumfriesshire, in March 1788, that a bargain was actually concluded. More than half of the intervening months were spent in Edinburgh, where Burns found, or fancied that his presence was necessary for the satisfactory completion of his affairs with the booksellers. It seems to be clear enough that one great object was the society of his jovial intimates in the capital. Nor was he without the amusement of a little romance to fill up what vacant hours they left him. He lodged that winter in Bristo Street, on purpose to be near a beautiful widow—the same to whom he addressed the song,

"Clarinda, mistress of my soul," &c.

and a series of prose epistles, which have been separately published, and which present more instances of bad taste, bombastic language, and fulsome sentiment, than could be produced from all his writings besides.

At this time the publication called *Johnson's Museum of Scottish Song* was going on in Edinburgh; and the editor appears to have early prevailed on Burns to give him his assistance in the arrangement of his materials. Though *Green grow the rashes* is the only song, entirely his, which appears in the first volume, published in 1787, many of the old ballads included in that volume bear traces of his hand; but in the second volume, which appeared in March 1788, we find no fewer than five songs by Burns; two that have been already mentioned, * and three far better than them, viz. *Theniel Menzies' bonny Mary;* that grand lyric,

"Farewell, ye dungeons dark and strong,
The wretch's destiny,
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows tree;"

both of which performances bespeak the recent impressions of his Highland visit; and, lastly, *Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad.* Burns had been from his youth upwards an enthusiastic lover of the old minstrelsy and music of his country; but he now studied both subjects with far better opportunities and appliances than he could have commanded previously; and it is from this time that we must date his ambition to transmit his own poetry to posterity, in eternal association with those exquisite airs which had hitherto, in far too many instances, been married to verses that did not deserve to be immortal. It is well known that from this time Burns composed very few pieces but songs; and whether we ought or not to regret that such was the case, must depend on the estimate we make of his songs as compared with his other poems; a point on which critics are to this hour divided, and on which their descendants are not very likely to agree. Mr. Walker, who is one of those that lament Burns's comparative dereliction of the species of composition which he most cultivated in the early days of his inspiration, suggests very sensibly, that if Burns had not taken to song-writing, he would probably have written little or nothing amidst the various temptations to company and dissipation which now and henceforth surrounded him—to say nothing of the active duties of life in which

* "Clarinda," and "How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon."

he was at length about to be engaged. Burns was present, on the 31st of December, at a dinner to celebrate the birth-day of the unfortunate Prince Charles Edward Stuart, and produced on the occasion an ode, part of which Dr. Currie has preserved. The specimen will not induce any regret that the remainder of the piece has been suppressed. It appears to be a mouthing rhapsody—far, far different indeed from the *Chevalier's Lament,* which the poet composed some months afterwards, with probably the tithe of the effort, while riding alone "through a track of melancholy muirs between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday." *

For six weeks of the time that Burns spent this year in Edinburgh, he was confined to his room, in consequence of an overturn in a hackney coach. "Here I am," he writes, "under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion, and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horrors preceding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest evil; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell, and myself, have formed a *quadruple alliance* to guarantee the other. I have taken tooth and nail to the Bible, and am got half way through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my bookbinder to-day, and ordered him to get an 8vo. Bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town, and bind it with all the elegance of his craft."†—In another letter, which opens gaily enough, we find him reverting to the same prevailing darkness of mood. "I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see any where in my path that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, Poverty, attended as he always is by iron-fisted Oppression, and leering Contempt. But I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day, and still my motto is *I* DARE. My worst enemy is *moi-même.* There are just two creatures that I would envy—a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment; the other has neither wish nor fear." ‡—One more specimen may be sufficient. ‖ "These have been six horrible weeks. Anguish and low spirits have made me unfit to read, write, or think. I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer does a commission; for I would not *take in* any poor ignorant wretch by *selling out.* Lately, I was a sixpenny private, and God knows a miserable soldier enough: now I march to the campaign a starving cadet, a little more conspicuously wretched. I am ashamed of all this; for though I do not want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice."

It seems impossible to doubt that Burns had in fact lingered in Edinburgh, in the hope that, to use a vague but sufficiently expressive phrase, something would be done for him. He visited and revisited a farm,—talked and wrote about "having a fortune at the plough-tail," and so forth; but all the while nourished, and assuredly it would have been most strange if he had not, the fond dream that the admiration of his country would ere long present itself in some solid and tangible shape. His illness and confinement gave him leisure to concentrate his imagination on the darker side of his prospects; and the letters which we have quoted may teach those who envy the powers and the fame of genius, to pause for a moment over

* General Correspondence, No. 46.
† Reliques, p. 43.
‡ Ibid. p. 44.
‖ General Correspondence, No. 43.

the annals of literature, and think what superior capabilities of misery have been, in the great majority of cases, interwoven with the possession of those very talents, from which all but their possessors derive unmingled gratification. Burns's distresses, however, were to be still farther aggravated. While still under the hands of his surgeon, he received intelligence from Mauchline that his intimacy with Jean Armour had once more exposed her to the reproaches of her family. The father sternly and at once turned her out of doors; and Burns, unable to walk across his room, had to write to his friends in Mauchline to procure shelter for his children, and for her whom he considered as—all but his wife. In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, written on hearing of this new misfortune, he says, "'*I wish I were dead, but I'm no like to die.*' I fear I am something like—undone; but I hope for the best. You must not desert me. Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously, though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path—— But my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on." *

It seems to have been *now* that Burns at last screwed up his courage to *solicit* the active interference in his behalf of the Earl of Glencairn. The letter is a brief one. Burns could ill endure this novel attitude, and he rushed at once to his request. "I wish," says he, "to get into the excise. I am told your Lordship will easily procure me the grant from the commissioners; and your lordship's patronage and kindness, which have already rescued me from obscurity, wretchedness, and exile, embolden me to ask that interest. You have likewise put it in my power to save the little tie of *home*, that sheltered an aged mother, two brothers, and three sisters from destruction. There, my lord, you have bound me over to the highest gratitude.——My heart sinks within me at the idea of applying to any other of The Great who have honoured me with their countenance. I am ill qualified to dog the heels of greatness with the impertinence of solicitation; and tremble nearly as much at the thought of the cold promise as of the cold denial." † It would be hard to think that this letter was coldly or negligently received; on the contrary, we know that Burns's gratitude to Lord Glencairn lasted as long as his life. But the excise appointment which he coveted was not procured by any exertion of his noble patron's influence. Mr. Alexander Wood, surgeon, (still affectionately remembered in Edinburgh as "kind old Sandy Wood,") happening to hear Burns, while his patient, mention the object of his wishes, went immediately, without dropping any hint of his intention, and communicated the state of the poet's case to Mr. Graham of Fintray, one of the commissioners of excise, who had met Burns at the Duke of Athole's in the autumn, and who immediately had the poet's name put on the roll.—"I have chosen this, my dear friend," (thus wrote Burns to Mrs. Dunlop), "after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of Fortune's palace shall we enter in; but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get any thing to do. I wanted *un bût*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on or mortifying solicitation. It is immediate bread, and, though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life. Besides, the commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends." ‡

* Reliques, p. 48. † General Correspondence, No. 40. ‡ Reliques, p. 50.

Our poet seems to have kept up an angry correspondence during his confinement with his bookseller, Mr. Creech, whom he also abuses very heartily in his letters to his friends in Ayrshire. The publisher's accounts, however, when they were at last made up, must have given the impatient author a very agreeable surprise; for, in his letter above quoted, to Lord Glencairn, we find him expressing his hopes that the gross profits of his book might amount to "better than £200," whereas, on the day of settling with Mr. Creech, he found himself in possession of £500, if not of £600. Mr. Nicoll, the most intimate friend Burns had, writes to Mr John Lewars, excise officer at Dumfries, immediately on hearing of the poet's death,—"He certainly told me that he received £600 for the first Edinburgh edition, and £100 afterwards for the copyright."—Dr. Currie states the gross product of Creech's edition at £500, and Burns himself, in one of his printed letters, at £400 only. Nicoll hints, in the letter already referred to, that Burns had contracted debts while in Edinburgh, which he might not wish to avow on all occasions; and if we are to believe this—and, as is probable, the expense of printing the subscription edition, should, moreover, be deducted from the £700 stated by Mr. Nicoll—the apparent contradictions in these stories may be pretty nearly reconciled. There appears to be reason for thinking that Creech subsequently paid more than £100 for the copyright. If he did not, how came Burns to realize, as Currie states it at the end of his Memoir, "nearly £900 in all by his poems?"

This supply came truly in the hour of need; and it seems to have elevated his spirits greatly, and given him for the time a new stock of confidence; for he now resumed immediately his purpose of taking Mr. Miller's farm, retaining his excise commission in his pocket as a *dernier resort*, to be made use of only should some reverse of fortune come upon him. His first act, however, was to relieve his brother from his difficulties, by advancing £180 or £200, to assist him in the management of Mossgiel. "I give myself no airs on this," he generously says, in a letter to Dr. Moore, "for it was mere selfishness on my part. I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that the throwing a little filial piety and fraternal affection into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the *grand reckoning*." *

* General Correspondence, No. 66.

CHAPTER VII.

CONTENTS. — *Marries — Announcements, (apologetical), of the event — Remarks — Becomes* (1788) *Farmer at Ellieslaud, on the Nith, in a romantic vicinity, six miles from Dumfries— The Muse wakeful as ever, while the Poet maintains a varied and extensive literary correspondence with all and sundry—Remarks upon the correspondence—Sketch of his person and habits at this period by a brother poet, who shows cause against success in farming— The untoward conjunction of Gauger to Farmer—The notice of the squirearchy, and the calls of admiring visitors, lead too uniformly to the ultra convivial life—Leaves Ellieslaud* (1791) *to be exciseman in the town of Dumfries.*

" To make a happy fireside clime
For weans and wife—
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life."

BURNS, as soon as his bruised limb was able for a journey, went to Mossgiel, and went through the ceremony of a Justice-of-Peace marriage with Jean Armour, in the writing-chambers of his friend Gavin Hamilton. He then crossed the country to Dalswinton, and concluded his bargain with Mr. Miller as to the farm of Ellieslaud, on terms which must undoubtedly have been considered by both parties, as highly favourable to the poet; they were indeed fixed by two of Burns's own friends, who accompanied him for that purpose from Ayrshire. The lease was for four successive terms, of nineteen years each,—in all seventy-six years; the rent for the first three years and crops £50; during the remainder of the period £70 per annum. Mr. Miller bound himself to defray the expense of any plantations which Burns might please to make on the banks of the river; and, the farm-house and offices being in a delapidated condition, the new tenant was to receive £300 from the proprietor, for the erection of suitable buildings. Burns entered on possession of his farm at Whitsuntide 1788, but the necessary rebuilding of the house prevented his removing Mrs. Burns thither until the season was far advanced. He had, moreover, to qualify himself for holding his excise commission by six weeks' attendance on the business of that profession at Ayr. From these circumstances, he led all the summer a wandering and unsettled life, and Dr. Currie mentions this as one of his chief misfortunes. The poet, as he says, was continually riding between Ayrshire and Dumfriesshire, and often spending a night on the road, " sometimes fell into company, and forgot the resolutions he had formed." What these resolutions were, the poet himself shall tell us. On the third day of his residence at Ellieslaud, he thus writes to Mr. Ainslie: —" I have all along hitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms, among the light-horse, the piquet guards of fancy, a kind of hussars and Highlanders of the brain; but I am firmly resolved to sell out of these giddy battalions. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy-armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding con

trivance. . . . Were it not for the terrors of my ticklish situation respecting a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness." *

To all his friends he expresses himself in terms of similar satisfaction in regard to his marriage. "Your surmise, Madam," he writes to Mrs. Dunlop, "is just. I am indeed a husband. I found a once much-loved, and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements, but as I enabled her to *purchase* a shelter; and there is no sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery. The most placid goodnature and sweetness of disposition; a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage by a more than commonly handsome figure; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page but the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, nor danced in a brighter assembly than a penny-pay wedding. . . . . To jealousy or infidelity I am an equal stranger; my preservative from the first, is the most thorough consciousness of her sentiments of honour, and her attachment to me; my antidote against the last, is my long and deep-rooted affection for her. In housewife matters, of aptness to learn, and activity to execute, she is eminently mistress, and during my absence in Nithsdale, she is regularly and constantly an apprentice to my mother and sisters in their dairy, and other rural business. . . . . You are right, that a bachelor state would have ensured me more friends; but from a cause you will easily guess, conscious peace in the enjoyment of my own mind, and unmistrusting confidence in approaching my God, would seldom have been of the number." †

Some months later he tells Miss Chalmers that his marriage "was not, perhaps, in consequence of the attachment of romance,"—(he is addressing a young lady),—"but," he continues, "I have no cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the country. Mrs. Burns believes as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit et le plus honnête homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever, in her life, except the Scriptures and the Psalms of David in Metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse—I must except also a certain late publication of Scots poems, which she has perused very devoutly, and all the ballads of the country, as she has (O the partial lover, you will say), the finest woodnote-wild I ever heard."—It was during this honeymoon, as he calls it, while chiefly resident in a miserable hovel at Elliesland, ‡ and only occasionally spending a day or two in Ayrshire, that he wrote the beautiful song: ‖

"Of a' the airts the wind can blaw I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives, the lassie I lo'e best;
There wildwoods grow, and rivers row, and mony a hill between;
But day and night my fancy's flight is ever wi' my Jean.

O blaw, ye westlin winds, blaw saft amang the leafy trees,
Wi' gentle gale, frae muir and dale, bring hame the laden bees,
And bring the lassie back to me, that's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae blink o' her wad banish care, sae lovely is my Jean."

* Reliques, p. 63.
† See General Correspondence, No. 53; and Reliques, p. 60.
‡ Reliques, p. 75.
‖ Ibid. p. 273.

One of Burns's letters, written not long after this, contains a passage strongly marked with his haughtiness of character. "I have escaped," says he, "the fantastic caprice, the apish affectation, with all the other blessed boarding-school acquirements which are *sometimes* to be found among females of the upper ranks, but almost universally pervade the misses of the would-be gentry."*

"A discerning reader," says Mr. Walker, "will perceive that the letters in which he announces his marriage to some of his most respected correspondents, are written in that state when the mind is pained by reflecting on an unwelcome step, and finds relief to itself in seeking arguments to justify the deed, and lessen its disadvantages in the opinion of others." † I confess I am not able to discern any traces of this kind of feeling in any of Burns's letters on this interesting and important occasion. The Rev. Hamilton Paul takes an original view of this business:—"Much praise," says he, "has been lavished on Burns for renewing his engagement with Jean when in the blaze of his fame. . . The praise is misplaced. We do not think a man entitled to credit or commendation for doing what the law could compel him to perform. Burns was in reality a married man, and it is truly ludicrous to hear him, aware as he must have been, of the indissoluble power of the obligation, though every document was destroyed, talking of himself as a bachelor." ‡ There is no justice in these remarks. It is very true, that, by a merciful fiction of the law of Scotland, the female, in Miss Armour's condition, who produces a written promise of marriage, is considered as having furnished evidence of an irregular marriage having taken place between her and her lover; but in this case the female herself had destroyed the document, and lived for many months not only not assuming, but rejecting the character of Burns's wife; and had she, under such circumstances, attempted to establish a marriage, with no document in her hand, and with no parole evidence to show that any such document had ever existed, to say nothing of proving its exact tenor, but that of her own father, it is clear that no ecclesiastical court in the world could have failed to decide against her. So far from Burns's having all along regarded her as his wife, it is extremely doubtful whether she had ever for one moment considered him as actually her husband, until he declared the marriage of 1788. Burns did no more than justice as well as honour demanded; but the act was one which no human tribunal could have compelled him to perform.

To return to our story. Burns complains sadly of his solitary condition, when living in the only hovel that he found extant on his farm. "I am," says he, (September 9th) "busy with my harvest, but for all that most pleasurable part of life called social intercourse, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose they only know in graces, &c., and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs, by the ell. As for the muses, they have as much idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet." And in another letter (September 16th) he says, "This hovel that I shelter in while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls, and I am only preserved from being chilled to death by being suffocated by smoke. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *eclat*, and bind every day after

* General Correspondence, No. 55.
† Morrison, vol. i. p. lxxxvii.
‡ Paul's Life of Burns, p. 45.

my reapers." His house, however, did not take much time in building; nor had he reason to complain of want of society long. He brought his wife home to Elliesland about the end of November; and few housekeepers start with a larger provision of young mouths to feed than this couple. Mrs. Burns had lain in this autumn, for the second time, of twins, and I suppose "sonsy, smirking, dear-bought Bess,"* accompanied her younger brothers and sisters from Mossgiel. From that quarter also Burns brought a whole establishment of servants, male and female, who, of course, as was then the universal custom amongst the small farmers, both of the west and of the south of Scotland, partook, at the same table, of the same fare with their master and mistress.

Elliesland is beautifully situated on the banks of the Nith, about six miles above Dumfries, exactly opposite to the house of Dalswinton, of those noble woods and gardens amidst which Burns's landlord, the ingenious Mr. Patrick Miller, found relaxation from the scientific studies and researches in which he so greatly excelled. On the Dalswinton side, the river washes lawns and groves; but over against these the bank rises into a long red *scaur*, of considerable height, along the verge of which, where the bare shingle of the precipice all but overhangs the stream, Burns had his favourite walk, and might now be seen striding alone, early and late, especially when the winds were loud, and the waters below him swollen and turbulent. For he was one of those that enjoy nature most in the more serious and severe of her aspects; and throughout his poetry, for one allusion to the liveliness of spring, or the splendour of summer, it would be easy to point out twenty in which he records the solemn delight with which he contemplated the melancholy grandeur of autumn, or the savage gloom of winter; and he has himself told us, that it was his custom "to take a gloamin' shot at the muses."

The poet was accustomed to say, that the most happy period of his life was the first winter he spent at Elliesland,—for the first time under a roof of his own—with his wife and children about him—and in spite of occasional lapses into the melancholy which had haunted his youth, looking forward to a life of well-regulated, and not ill-rewarded, industry. It is known that he welcomed his wife to her rooftree at Elliesland in the song,

> "I hae a wife o' mine ain, I'll partake wi' naebody;
> I'll tak cuckold frae nane, I'll gie cuckold to naebody;
> I hae a penny to spend—there—thanks to naebody;
> I hae naething to lend—I'll borrow frae naebody."

In commenting on this "little lively lucky song," as he well calls it, Mr. A. Cunningham says, "Burns had built his house, he had committed his seed-corn to the ground, he was in the prime, nay the morning of life—health, and strength, and agricultural skill were on his side—his genius had been acknowledged by his country, and rewarded by a subscription, more extensive than any Scottish poet ever received before; no wonder, therefore, that he broke out into voluntary song, expressive of his sense of importance and independence."

Burns, in his letters of the year 1789, makes many apologies for doing but little in his poetical vocation; his farm, without doubt, occupied much of his attention, but the want of social intercourse, of which he complained on his first arrival in Nithsdale, had by this time totally disappeared. On

* Poetical Inventory to Mr. Aiken, February 1786.

the contrary, his company was courted eagerly, not only by his brother-farmers, but by the neighbouring gentry of all classes; and now, too, for the first time, he began to be visited continually in his own house by curious travellers of all sorts, who did not consider, any more than the generous poet himself, that an extensive practice of hospitality must cost more time than he ought to have had, and far more money than he ever had, at his disposal. Meantime, he was not wholly regardless of the muses; for in addition to some pieces which we have already had occasion to notice, he contributed to this year's Museum, *The Thames flows proudly to the Sea; The lazy mist hangs, &c.; The day returns, my bosom burns; Tam Glen*, (one of the best of his humorous songs); the splendid lyric, *Go fetch to me a pint of wine*, and *My heart's in the Hielands*, (in both of which, however, he adopted some lines of ancient songs to the same tunes); *John Anderson*, in part also a *rifacciamento;* the best of all his Bacchanalian pieces, *Willie brewed a peck o' maut*, written in celebration of a festive meeting at the country residence, in Dumfriesshire, of his friend Mr. Nicoll of the High School; and lastly, that noblest of all his ballads, *To Mary in Heaven*. This celebrated poem was, it is on all hands admitted, composed by Burns in September 1789, on the anniversary of the day on which he heard of the death of his early love, Mary Campbell; but Mr. Cromek has thought fit to dress up the story with circumstances which did not occur. Mrs. Burns, the only person who could appeal to personal recollection on this occasion, and whose recollections of all circumstances connected with the history of her husband's poems, are represented as being remarkably distinct and vivid, gives what may at first appear a more prosaic edition of the history. * According to her, Burns spent that day, though labouring under cold, in the usual work of his harvest, and apparently in excellent spirits. But as the twilight deepened, he appeared to grow "very sad about something," and at length wandered out into the barn-yard, to which his wife, in her anxiety for his health, followed him, entreating him in vain to observe that frost had set in, and to return to the fireside. On being again and again requested to do so, he always promised compliance—but still remained where he was, striding up and down slowly, and contemplating the sky, which was singularly clear and starry. At last Mrs. Burns found him stretched on a mass of straw, with his eyes fixed on a beautiful planet "that shone like another moon;" and prevailed on him to come in. He immediately on entering the house, called for his desk, and wrote exactly as they now stand, with all the ease of one copying from memory, the sublime and pathetic verses—

> "Thou lingering star with lessening ray,
> That lovest to greet the early morn,
> Again thou usher'st in the day
> My Mary from my soul was torn.
> O Mary, dear departed shade,
> Where is thy place of blissful rest;
> See'st thou thy lover lowly laid,
> Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?" &c.

The *Mother's Lament for her Son*, and *Inscription in an Hermitage in Nithsdale*, were also written this year. From the time when Burns settled himself in Dumfriesshire, he appears to have conducted with much care the extensive correspondence in which his celebrity had engaged him. The

* I owe these particulars to Mr. M'Diarmid, the able editor of the Dumfries Courier, and brother of the lamented author of "Lives of British Statesmen."

letters that passed between him and his brother Gilbert, are among the most precious of the collection. That the brothers had entire knowledge of and confidence in each other, no one can doubt; and the plain manly affectionate language in which they both write, is truly honourable to them, and to the parents that reared them. "Dear Brother," writes Gilbert, January 1st, 1789, "I have just finished my new-year's-day breakfast in the usual form, which naturally makes me call to mind the days of former years, and the society in which we used to begin them; and when I look at our family vicissitudes, 'through the dark postern of time long elapsed,' I cannot help remarking to you, my dear brother, how good the God of seasons is to us; and that, however some clouds may seem to lour over the portion of time before us, we have great reason to hope that all will turn out well."

It was on the same new-year's-day that Burns himself addressed to Mrs. Dunlop a letter, part of which is here transcribed. It is dated Elliesland, New-year-day morning, 1789, and certainly cannot be read too often:—"This, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to God that I came under the apostle James's description!—*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* In that case, madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings; every thing that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment, should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste, should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery. This day,—the first Sunday of May,—a breezy, blue-skyed moon sometime about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

"I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, 'The Vision of Mirza;' a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: 'On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer.' We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain-daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild brier-rose, the budding-birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave."

Few, it is to be hoped, can read such things as these without delight; none, surely, that taste the elevated pleasure they are calculated to inspire, can turn from them to the well-known issue of Burns's history, without being afflicted. The "golden days" of Ellieslaud, as Dr. Currie justly calls them, were not destined to be many. Burns's farming speculations once more failed; and he himself seems to have been aware that such was likely to be the case ere he had given the business many months' trial; for, ere the autumn of 1788 was over, he applied to his patron, Mr. Graham of Fintray, for actual employment as an exciseman, and was accordingly appointed to do duty, in that capacity, in the district where his lands were situated. His income, as a revenue officer, was at first only £35; it by and by rose to £50; and sometimes was £70. These pounds were hardly earned, since the duties of his new calling necessarily withdrew him very often from the farm, which needed his utmost attention, and exposed him, which was still worse, to innumerable temptations of the kind he was least likely to resist.

I have now the satisfaction of presenting the reader with some particulars of this part of Burns's history, derived from a source which every lover of Scotland and Scottish poetry must be prepared to hear mentioned with respect. It happened that at the time when our poet went to Nithsdale, the father of Mr. Allan Cunningham was steward on the estate of Dalswinton: he was, as all who have read the writings of his sons will readily believe, a man of remarkable talents and attainments: he was a wise and good man; a devout admirer of Burns's genius; and one of those sober neighbours who in vain strove, by advice and warning, to arrest the poet in the downhill path, towards which a thousand seductions were perpetually drawing him. Mr. Allan Cunningham was, of course, almost a child when he first saw Burns; but, in what he has to say on this subject, we may be sure we are hearing the substance of his benevolent and sagacious father's observations and reflections. His own boyish recollections of the poet's personal appearance and demeanour will, however, be read with interest. "I was very young," says Allan Cunningham, "when I first saw Burns. He came to see my father; and their conversation turned partly on farming, partly on poetry, in both of which my father had taste and skill. Burns had just come to Nithsdale; and I think he appeared a shade more swarthy than he does in Nasmyth's picture, and at least ten years older than he really was at the time. His face was deeply marked by thought, and the habitual expression intensely melancholy. His frame was very muscular and well proportioned, though he had a short neck, and something of a ploughman's stoop: he was strong, and proud of his strength. I saw him one evening match himself with a number of masons; and out of five-and-twenty practised hands, the most vigorous young men in the parish, there was only one that could lift the same weight as Burns. He had a very manly face, and a very melancholy look; but on the coming of those he esteemed, his looks brightened up, and his whole face beamed with affection and genius. His voice was very musical. I once heard him read *Tam o' Shanter*. I think I hear him now. His fine manly voice followed all the undulations of the sense, and expressed as well as his genius had done, the pathos and humour, the horrible and the awful, of that wonderful performance. As a man feels, so will he write; and in proportion as he sympathizes with his author, so will he read him with grace and effect.

" I said that Burns and my father conversed about poetry and farming. The poet had newly taken possession of his farm of Ellisland,—the masons were busy building his house,—the applause of the world was with him, and a little of its money in his pocket,—in short, he had found a resting-place at last. He spoke with great delight about the excellence of his farm, and particularly about the beauty of the situation. ' Yes,' my father said, ' the walks on the river bank are fine, and you will see from your windows some miles of the Nith; but you will also see several farms of fine rich *holm*,* any one of which you might have had. You have made a poet's choice, rather than a farmer's.' If Burns had much of a farmer's skill, he had little of a farmer's prudence and economy. I once inquired of James Corrie, a sagacious old farmer, whose ground marched with Ellisland, the cause of the poet's failure. ' Faith,' said he, ' how could he miss but fail, when his servants ate the bread as fast as it was baked? I don't mean figuratively, I mean literally. Consider a little. At that time close economy was necessary to have enabled a man to clear twenty pounds a-year by Ellisland. Now, Burns's own handywork was out of the question: he neither ploughed, nor sowed, nor reaped, at least like a hard-working farmer; and then he had a bevy of servants from Ayrshire. The lasses did nothing but bake bread, and the lads sat by the fireside, and ate it warm with ale. Waste of time and consumption of food would soon reach to twenty pounds a-year.' "

" The truth of the case," says Mr. Cunningham, in another letter with which he has favoured me, " the truth is, that if Robert Burns liked his farm, it was more for the beauty of the situation than for the labours which it demanded. He was too wayward to attend to the stated duties of a husbandman, and too impatient to wait till the ground returned in gain the cultivation he bestowed upon it. The condition of a farmer, a Nithsdale one, I mean, was then very humble. His one-story house had a covering of straw, and a clay floor; the furniture was from the hands of a country carpenter; and, between the roof and floor, there seldom intervened a smoother ceiling than of rough rods and grassy turf—while a huge lang-settle of black oak for himself, and a carved arm-chair for his wife, were the only matters out of keeping with the homely looks of his residence. He took all his meals in his own kitchen, and presided regularly among his children and domestics. He performed family worship every evening—except during the hurry of harvest, when that duty was perhaps limited to Saturday night. A few religious books, two or three favourite poets, the history of his country, and his Bible, aided him in forming the minds and manners of the family. To domestic education, Scotland owes as much as to the care of her clergy, and the excellence of her parish schools.

" The picture out of doors was less interesting. The ground from which the farmer sought support, was generally in a very moderate state of cultivation. The implements with which he tilled his land were primitive and clumsy, and his own knowledge of the management of crops exceedingly limited. He plodded on in the regular slothful routine of his ancestors; he rooted out no bushes, he dug up no stones; he drained not, neither did he enclose; and weeds obtained their full share of the dung and the lime, which he bestowed more like a medicine than a meal on his soil. His plough was the rude old Scotch one; his harrows had as often teeth of

* *Holm* is flat, rich meadow land, intervening between a stream and the general elevation of the adjoining country.

wood as of iron; his carts were heavy and low-wheeled, or were, more properly speaking, tumbler-carts, so called to distinguish them from trail-carts, both of which were in common use. On these rude carriages his manure was taken to the field, and his crop brought home. The farmer himself corresponded in all respects with his imperfect instruments. His poverty secured him from risking costly experiments; and his hatred of innovation made him entrench himself behind a breast-work of old maxims and rustic saws, which he interpreted as oracles delivered against *improvement*. With ground in such condition, with tools so unfit, and with knowledge so imperfect, he sometimes succeeded in wringing a few hundred pounds *Scots* from the farm he occupied. Such was generally the state of agriculture when Burns came to Nithsdale. I know not how far his own skill was equal to the task of improvement—his trial was short and unfortunate. An important change soon took place, by which he was not fated to profit; he had not the foresight to see its approach, nor, probably, the fortitude to await its coming.

"In the year 1790, much of the ground in Nithsdale was leased at seven, and ten, and fifteen shillings per acre; and the farmer, in his person and his house, differed little from the peasants and mechanics around him. He would have thought his daughter wedded in her degree, had she married a joiner or a mason; and at kirk or market, all men beneath the rank of a "portioner" of the soil mingled together, equals in appearance and importance. But the war which soon commenced, gave a decided impulse to agriculture; the army and navy consumed largely; corn rose in demand; the price augmented; more land was called into cultivation; and, as leases expired, the proprietors improved the grounds, built better houses, enlarged the rents; and the farmer was soon borne on the wings of sudden wealth above his original condition. His house obtained a slated roof, sash-windows, carpeted floors, plastered walls, and even began to exchange the hanks of yarn with which it was formerly hung, for paintings and pianofortes. He laid aside his coat of home-made cloth; he retired from his seat among his servants; he—I am grieved to mention it—gave up family worship as a thing unfashionable, and became a kind of *rustic gentleman*, who rode a blood horse, and galloped home on market nights at the peril of his own neck, and to the terror of every modest pedestrian. When a change like this took place, and a farmer could, with a dozen years' industry, be able to purchase the land he rented—which many were, and many did—the same, or a still more profitable change might have happened with respect to Elliesland; and Burns, had he stuck by his lease and his plough, would, in all human possibility, have found the independence which he sought, and sought in vain, from the coldness and parsimony of mankind."

Mr. Cunningham sums up his reminiscences of Burns at Elliesland in these terms:—"During the prosperity of his farm, my father often said that Burns conducted himself wisely, and like one anxious for his name as a man, and his fame as a poet. He went to Dunscore Kirk on Sunday, though he expressed oftener than once his dislike to the stern Calvinism of that strict old divine, Mr. Kirkpatrick;—he assisted in forming a reading club; and at weddings and house-heatings, and kirns, and other scenes of festivity, he was a welcome guest, universally liked by the young and the old. But the failure of his farming projects, and the limited income with which he was compelled to support an increasing family and an expensive station in life, preyed on his spirits; and, during these fits of despair, he was will-

ing too often to become the companion of the thoughtless and the gross. I am grieved to say, that besides leaving the book too much for the bowl, and grave and wise friends for lewd and reckless companions, he was also in the occasional practice of composing songs, in which he surpassed the licentiousness, as well as the wit and humour, of the old Scottish muse. These have unfortunately found their way to the press, and I am afraid they cannot be recalled. In conclusion, I may say, that few men have had so much of the poet about them, and few poets so much of the man;—the man was probably less pure than he ought to have been, but the poet was pure and bright to the last."

The reader must be sufficiently prepared to hear, that from the time when he entered on his excise duties, the poet more and more neglected the concerns of his farm. Occasionally, he might be seen holding the plough, an exercise in which he excelled, and was proud of excelling, or stalking down his furrows, with the white sheet of grain wrapt about him, a "tenty seedsman;" but he was more commonly occupied in far different pursuits. "I am now," says he, in one of his letters, "a poor rascally gauger, condemned to gallop two hundred miles every week, to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels." Both in verse and in prose he has recorded the feelings with which he first followed his new vocation. His jests on the subject are uniformly bitter. "I have the same consolation," he tells Mr Ainslie, "which I once heard a recruiting sergeant give to his audience in the streets of Kilmarnock: 'Gentlemen, for your farther encouragement, I can assure you that ours is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and, consequently, with us an honest fellow has the surest chance of preferment.'" On one occasion, however, he takes a higher tone. "There is a certain stigma," says he to Bishop Geddes, "in the name of Exciseman; but I do not intend to borrow honour from any profession:"—which may perhaps remind the reader of Gibbon's lofty language, on finally quitting the learned and polished circles of London and Paris, for his Swiss retirement: "I am too modest, or too proud, to rate my value by that of my associates."

Burns, in his perpetual perambulations over the moors of Dumfriesshire, had every temptation to encounter, which bodily fatigue, the blandishments of hosts and hostesses, and the habitual manners of those who acted along with him in the duties of the excise, could present. He was, moreover, wherever he went, exposed to perils of his own, by the reputation which he had earned as a poet, and by his extraordinary powers of entertainment in conversation. From the castle to the cottage, every door flew open at his approach; and the old system of hospitality, then flourishing, rendered it difficult for the most soberly inclined guest to rise from any man's board in the same trim that he sat down to it. The farmer, if Burns was seen passing, left his reapers, and trotted by the side of Jenny Geddes, until he could persuade the bard that the day was hot enough to demand an extra-libation. If he entered an inn at midnight, after all the inmates were in bed, the news of his arrival circulated from the cellar to the garret; and ere ten minutes had elapsed, the landlord and all his guests were assembled round the ingle; the largest punch-bowl was produced; and

"Be ours this night—who knows what comes to-morrow?"

was the language of every eye in the circle that welcomed him. The stateliest gentry of the county, whenever they had especial merriment in

view, called in the wit and eloquence of Burns to enliven their carousals.* The famous song of *The Whistle of worth* commemorates a scene of this kind, more picturesque in some of its circumstances than every day occurred, yet strictly in character with the usual tenor of life among this jovial *squirearchy*. Three gentlemen of ancient descent, had met to determine, by a solemn drinking match, who should possess *the Whistle*, which a common ancestor of them all had earned ages before, in a Bacchanalian contest of the same sort with a noble toper from Denmark; and the poet was summoned to watch over and celebrate the issue of the debate.

> "Then up rose the bard like a prophet in drink,
> Craigdarroch shall soar when creation shall sink;
> But if thou would'st flourish immortal in rhyme,
> Come, one bottle more, and have at the sublime."

Nor, as has already been hinted, was he safe from temptations of this kind, even when he was at home, and most disposed to enjoy in quiet the society of his wife and children. Lion-gazers from all quarters beset him; they ate and drank at his cost, and often went away to criticise him and his fare, as if they had done Burns and his *black bowl* † great honour in condescending to be entertained for a single evening, with such company and such liquor.

We have on record various glimpses of him, as he appeared while he was half-farmer, half-exciseman; and some of these present him in attitudes and aspects, on which it would be pleasing to dwell. For example, the circumstances under which the verses on *The wounded Hare* were written, are mentioned generally by the poet himself. James Thomson, son of the occupier of a farm adjoining Elliesland, told Allan Cunningham, that it was he who wounded the animal. "Burns," said this person, "was in the custom, when at home, of strolling by himself in the twilight every evening, along the Nith, and by the *march* between his land and ours. The hares often came and nibbled our wheat *braird;* and once, in the gloaming,—it was in April,—I got a shot at one, and wounded her: she ran bleeding by Burns, who was pacing up and down by himself, not far from me. He started, and with a bitter curse, ordered me out of his sight, or he would throw me instantly into the Nith. And had I stayed, I'll warrant he would have been as good as his word—though I was both young and strong."

Among other curious travellers who found their way about this time to Elliesland, was Captain Grose, the celebrated antiquarian, whom Burns briefly describes as

> "A fine fat fodgel wight—
> Of stature short, but genius bright;"

and who has painted his own portrait, both with pen and pencil, at full length, in his *Olio*. This gentleman's taste and pursuits are ludicrously set forth in the copy of verses—

* These particulars are from a letter of David Macculloch, Esq., who, being at this period a very young man, a passionate admirer of Burns, and a capital singer of many of his serious songs, used often, in his enthusiasm, to accompany the poet on his professional excursions.

† Burns's famous black punch-bowl, of Inverary marble, was the nuptial gift of Mr. Armour, his father-in-law, who himself fashioned it. After passing through many hands, it is now in excellent keeping, that of Alexander Hastie, Esq. of London.

" Hear, Land o' Cakes and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to John O'Groats,
A chield's amang ye takin' notes," &c.

and, *inter alia*, his love of port is not forgotten. Grose and Burns had too much in common, not to become great friends. The poet's accurate knowledge of Scottish phraseology and customs, was of great use to the researches of the humourous antiquarian; and, above all, it is to their acquaintance that we owe *Tam o' Shanter*. Burns told the story as he had heard it in Ayrshire, in a letter to the Captain, and was easily persuaded to versify it. The poem was the work of one day; and Mrs. Burns well remembers the circumstances. He spent most of the day on his favourite walk by the river, where, in the afternoon, she joined him with some of her children. " He was busily engaged *crooning to himself*, and Mrs. Burns perceiving that her presence was an interruption, loitered behind with her little ones among the broom. Her attention was presently attracted by the strange and wild gesticulations of the bard, who, now at some distance, was *agonized* with an ungovernable access of joy. He was reciting very loud, and with the tears rolling down his cheeks, those animated verses which he had just conceived:—

" Now Tam! O Tam! had they been queans,
A' plump and strappin' in their teens;
Their sarks, instead of creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen-hunder *linen,—
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush o' good blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them off my hurdies,
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!" †

To the last Burns was of opinion that *Tam o' Shanter* was the best of all his productions; and although it does not always happen that poet and public come to the same conclusion on such points, I believe the decision in question has been all but unanimously approved of. The admirable execution of the piece, so far as it goes, leaves nothing to wish for; the only criticism has been, that the catastrophe appears unworthy of the preparation. Burns lays the scene of this remarkable performance almost on the spot where he was born; and all the terrific circumstances by which he has marked the progress of Tam's midnight journey, are drawn from local tradition.

" By this time he was cross the ford
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd,
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drucken Charlie brak's neck-bane;
And through the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunter's fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare Mungo's mither hang'd hersell."

None of these tragic memoranda were derived from imagination. Nor was Tam o' Shanter himself an imaginary character. Shanter is a farm close to Kirkoswald's, that smuggling village, in which Burns, when nineteen years old, studied mensuration, and " first became acquainted with scenes of swaggering riot." The then occupier of Shanter, by name Douglas

* " The manufacturer's term for a fine linen, woven on a reed of 1700 divisions."—*Cromek.*

† The above is quoted from a MS. journal of Cromek. Mr. M'Diarmid confirms the statement, and adds, that the poet, having committed the verses to writing on the top of his *sod-dyke* over the water, came into the house, and read them immediately in high triumph at the fireside.

Grahame, was, by all accounts, equally what the Tam of the poet appears, —a jolly, careless, rustic, who took much more interest in the contraband traffic of the coast, than the rotation of crops. Burns knew the man well; and to his dying day, he, nothing loath, passed among his rural compeers by the name of Tam o' Shanter.

A few words will bring us to the close of Burns's career at Ellisland. Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, happening to pass through Nithsdale in 1790, met Burns riding rapidly near Closeburn. The poet was obliged to pursue his professional journey, but sent on Mr. Ramsay and his fellow-traveller to Ellisland, where he joined them as soon as his duty permitted him, saying, as he entered, " I come, to use the words of Shakspeare, *stewed in haste.*" Mr. Ramsay was " much pleased with his *uxor Sabina qualis*, and his modest mansion, so unlike the habitation of ordinary rustics." The evening was spent delightfully. A gentleman of dry temperament, who looked in accidentally, soon partook the contagion, and sat listening to Burns with the tears running over his cheeks. " Poor Burns!" says Mr. Ramsay, " from that time I met him no more."

The summer after, some English travellers, calling at Ellisland, were told that the poet was walking by the river. They proceeded in search of him, and presently, " on a rock that projected into the stream, they saw a man employed in angling, of a singular appearance. He had a cap made of a fox's skin on his head; a loose great-coat, fastened round him by a belt, from which depended an enormous Highland broadsword. It was Burns. He received them with great cordiality, and asked them to share his humble dinner." These travellers also classed the evening they spent at Ellisland with the brightest of their lives.

Towards the close of 1791, the poet, finally despairing of his farm, determined to give up his lease, which the kindness of his landlord rendered easy of arrangement; and procuring an appointment to the Dumfries division, which raised his salary from the revenue to £70 per annum, removed his family to the county town, in which he terminated his days. His conduct as an excise officer had hitherto met with uniform approbation; and he nourished warm hopes of being promoted, when he had thus avowedly devoted himself altogether to the service. He left Ellisland, however, with a heavy heart. The affection of his neighbours was rekindled in all its early fervour by the thoughts of parting with him; and the *roup* of his farming-stock and other effects, was, in spite of whisky, a very melancholy scene. The competition for his chattles was eager, each being anxious to secure a memorandum of Burns's residence among them. It is pleasing to know, that among other " titles manifold" to their respect and gratitude, Burns had superintended the formation of a subscription library in the parish. His letters to the booksellers on this subject do him much honour: his choice of authors (which business was naturally left to his discretion) being in the highest degree judicious. Such institutions are now common, almost universal, indeed, in all the rural districts of southern Scotland; but it should never be forgotten that Burns was among the first, if not the very first, to set the example. " He was so good," says Mr. Riddel, " as to take the whole management of this concern; he was treasurer, librarian, and censor, to our little society, who will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit, and exertions for their improvement and information." Once, and only once, did Burns quit his residence at Ellisland to revisit Edinburgh. His object was to close accounts with Creech; that business ac-

complished, he returned immediately, and he never again saw the capital. He thus writes to Mrs. Dunlop :—" To a man who has a home, however humble and remote, if that home is, like mine, the scene of domestic comfort, the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening disgust—

" Vain pomp and glory of the world, I hate you !"

" When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim, what merits had he had, or what demerits have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule, and the key of riches in his puny fist, and I kicked into the world, the sport of folly or the victim of pride . . . . often as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp of Prince's Street, it has suggested itself to me as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a perspective."

CHAPTER VIII.

CONTENTS.—*Is more beset in town than country—His early biographers, (Dr. Currie not excepted), have coloured too darkly under that head—It is not correct to speak of the poet as having sunk into a toper, or a solitary drinker, or of his revels as other than occasional, or of their having interfered with the punctual discharge of his official duties—He is shown to have been the affectionate and beloved husband, although passing follies imputed; and the constant and most assiduous instructor of his children—Impulses of the French Revolution —Symptoms of fraternizing—The attention of his official superiors is called to them—Practically no blow is inflicted, only the bad name—Interesting details of this period—Gives his whole soul to song making—Preference in that for his native dialect, with the other attendant facts, as to that portion of his immortal lays.*

"The King's most humble servant, I
Can scarcely spare a minute;
But I am yours at dinner-time,
Or else the devil's in it." *

THE four principal biographers of our poet, Heron, Currie, Walker, and Irving, concur in the general statement, that his moral course from the time when he settled in Dumfries, was downwards. Heron knew more of the matter personally than any of the others, and his words are these :—"In Dumfries his dissipation became still more deeply habitual. He was here exposed more than in the country, to be solicited to share the riot of the dissolute and the idle. Foolish young men, such as writers' apprentices, young surgeons, merchants' clerks, and his brother excisemen, flocked eagerly about him, and from time to time pressed him to drink with them, that they might enjoy his wicked wit. The Caledonian Club, too, and the Dumfries and Galloway Hunt, had occasional meetings in Dumfries after Burns came to reside there, and the poet was of course invited to share their hospitality, and hesitated not to accept the invitation. The morals of the town were, in consequence of its becoming so much the scene of public amusement, not a little corrupted, and though a husband and a father, Burns did not escape suffering by the general contamination, in a manner which I forbear to describe. In the intervals between his different fits of intemperance, he suffered the keenest anguish of remorse and horribly afflictive foresight. His Jean behaved with a degree of maternal and conjugal tenderness and prudence, which made him feel more bitterly the evils of his misconduct, though they could not reclaim him."—This picture, dark as it is, wants some distressing shades that mingle in the parallel one by Dr. Currie ; it wants nothing, however, of which truth demands the insertion. That Burns, dissipated, ere he went to Dumfries, became still more dissipated in a town, than he had been in the country, is certain. It may also be true, that his wife had her own

* "The above answer to an invitation was written extempore on a leaf torn from his Excise-book.—*Cromek's MSS*

particular causes, sometimes, for dissatisfaction. But that Burns ever sunk into a toper—that he ever was addicted to solitary drinking—that his bottle ever interfered with his discharge of his duties as an exciseman—or that, in spite of some transitory follies, he ever ceased to be a most affectionate husband—all these charges have been insinuated—and they are all *false.* His intemperance was, as Heron says, in *fits;* his aberrations of all kinds were occasional, not systematic; they were all to himself the sources of exquisite misery in the retrospect; they were the aberrations of a man whose moral sense was never deadened;—of one who encountered more temptations from without and from within, than the immense majority of mankind, far from having to contend against, are even able to imagine;—of one, finally, who prayed for pardon, where alone effectual pardon could be found;—and who died ere he had reached that term of life up to which the passions of many, who, their mortal career being regarded as a whole, are honoured as among the most virtuous of mankind, have proved too strong for the control of reason. We have already seen that the poet was careful of decorum in all things during the brief space of his prosperity at Ellieslaud, and that he became less so on many points, as the prospects of his farming speculation darkened around him. It seems to be equally certain, that he entertained high hopes of promotion in the excise at the period of his removal to Dumfries; and that the comparative recklessness of his later conduct there, was consequent on a certain overclouding of these professional expectations. The case is broadly stated so by Walker and Paul; and there are hints to the same effect in the narrative of Currie. The statement has no doubt been exaggerated, but it has its foundation in truth; and by the kindness of Mr. Train, supervisor at Castle Douglas in Galloway, I shall presently be enabled to give some details which may throw light on this business.

Burns was much patronised when in Edinburgh by the Honourable Henry Erskine, Dean of the Faculty of Advocates, and other leading Whigs of the place—much more so, to their honour be it said, than by any of the influential adherents of the then administration. His landlord at Ellieslaud, Mr. Miller of Dalswinton, his neighbour. Mr. Riddel of Friars-Carse, and most of the other gentlemen who showed him special attention, belonged to the same political party; and, on his removal to Dumfries, it so happened, that some of his immediate superiors in the revenue service of the district, and other persons of standing authority, into whose society he was thrown, entertained sentiments of the same description. Burns, whenever in his letters he talks seriously of political matters, uniformly describes his early jacobitism as mere "matter of fancy." It may, however, be easily believed, that a fancy like his, long indulged in dreams of that sort, was well prepared to pass into certain other dreams, which likewise involved feelings of dissatisfaction with "the existing order of things." Many of the old elements of political disaffection in Scotland, put on a new shape at the outbreaking of the French Revolution; and jacobites became half jacobins, ere they were at all aware in what the doctrines of jacobinism were to end. The Whigs naturally regarded the first dawn of freedom in France with feelings of sympathy, delight, exultation. The general, the all but universal tone of feeling was favourable to the first assailants of the Bourbon despotism; and there were few who more ardently participated in the general sentiment of the day than Burns. The revulsion of feeling that took place in this country at large, when wanton atrocities began to stain

the course of the French Revolution, and Burke lifted his powerful voice, was great. Scenes more painful at the time, and more so even now in the retrospect, than had for generations afflicted Scotland, were the consequences of the rancour into which party feelings on both sides now rose and fermented. Old and dear ties of friendship were torn in sunder; society was for a time shaken to its centre. In the most extravagant dreams of the jacobites there had always been much to command respect, high chivalrous devotion, reverence for old affections, ancestral loyalty, and the generosity of romance. In the new species of hostility, every thing seemed mean as well as perilous; it was scorned even more than hated. The very name stained whatever it came near; and men that had known and loved each other from boyhood, stood aloof, if this influence interfered, as if it had been some loathsome pestilence.

There was a great deal of stately Toryism at this time in the town of Dumfries, which was the favourite winter retreat of many of the best gentlemen's families of the south of Scotland. Feelings that worked more violently in Edinburgh than in London, acquired additional energy still, in this provincial capital. All men's eyes were upon Burns. He was the standing marvel of the place; his toasts, his jokes, his epigrams, his songs, were the daily food of conversation and scandal; and he, open and careless, and thinking he did no great harm in saying and singing what many of his superiors had not the least objection to hear and applaud, soon began to be considered among the local admirers and disciples of King George the Third and his minister, as the most dangerous of all the apostles of sedition,—and to be shunned accordingly.

The records of the Excise-Office are silent concerning the suspicions which the Commissioners of the time certainly took up in regard to Burns as a political offender—according to the phraseology of the tempestuous period, a *democrat*. In that department, as then conducted, I am assured that nothing could have been more unlike the usual course of things, than that one syllable should have been set down in writing on such a subject, unless the case had been one of extremities. That an inquiry was instituted, we know from Burns's own letters—but what the exact termination of the inquiry was, will never, in all probability, be ascertained. According to the tradition of the neighbourhood, Burns, *inter alia*, gave great offence by demurring in a large mixed company to the proposed toast, "the health of William Pitt;" and left the room in indignation, because the society rejected what he wished to substitute, namely, "the health of a greater and a better man, George Washington." I suppose the warmest admirer of Mr. Pitt's talents and politics would hardly venture now-a-days to dissent substantially from Burns's estimate of the comparative merits of these two great men. The name of Washington, at all events, when contemporary passions shall have finally sunk into the peace of the grave, will unquestionably have its place in the first rank of heroic virtue,—a station which demands the exhibition of victory pure and unstained over temptations and trials extraordinary, in kind as well as strength. But at the time when Burns, being a servant of Mr. Pitt's government, was guilty of this indiscretion, it is obvious that a great deal "more was meant than reached the ear." In the poet's own correspondence, we have traces of another occurrence of the same sort. Burns thus writes to a gentleman at whose table he had dined the day before:—"I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Captain ——— made use

of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manner of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and children in a drunken squabble. Farther, you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread last night's business may be interpreted in the same way. You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mrs. Burns's welfare with the task of waiting on every gentleman who was present to state this to him; and, as you please, show this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? *May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause*—a toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to."—Burns, no question, was guilty of unpoliteness as well as indiscretion, in offering any such toasts as these in mixed company; but that such toasts should have been considered as attaching any grave suspicion to his character as a loyal subject, is a circumstance which can only be accounted for by reference to the exaggerated state of political feelings on all matters, and among all descriptions of men, at that melancholy period of disaffection, distrust, and disunion. Who, at any other period than that lamentable time, would ever have dreamed of erecting the drinking, or declining to drink, the health of a particular minister, or the approving, or disapproving, of a particular measure of government, into the test of a man's loyalty to his King?

Burns, eager of temper, loud of tone, and with declamation and sarcasm equally at command, was, we may easily believe, the most hated of human beings, because the most dreaded, among the provincial champions of the administration of which he thought fit to disapprove. But that he ever, in his most ardent moods, upheld the principles of those whose applause of the French Revolution was but the mask of revolutionary designs at home, after these principles had been really developed by those that maintained them, and understood by him, it may be safely denied. There is not, in all his correspondence, one syllable to give countenance to such a charge. His indiscretion, however, did not always confine itself to words; and though an incident now about to be recorded, belongs to the year 1792, before the French war broke out, there is reason to believe that it formed the main subject of the inquiry which the Excise Commissioners thought themselves called upon to institute touching the politics of our poet.

At that period a great deal of contraband traffic, chiefly from the Isle of Man, was going on along the coasts of Galloway and Ayrshire, and the whole of the revenue officers from Gretna to Dumfries, were placed under the orders of a superintendent residing in Annan, who exerted himself zealously in intercepting the descent of the smuggling vessels. On the 27th of February, a suspicious-looking brig was discovered in the Solway Frith, and Burns was one of the party whom the superintendent conducted to watch her motions. She got into shallow water the day afterwards, and the officers were enabled to discover that her crew were numerous, armed, and not likely to yield without a struggle. Lewars, a brother exciseman, an intimate friend of our poet, was accordingly sent to Dumfries for a guard of dragoons; the superintendent, Mr. Crawford, proceeded himself on a similar errand to Ecclefechan, and Burns was left with some men under his orders, to watch the brig, and prevent landing or escape. From

the private journal of one of the excisemen, (now in my hands), it appears that Burns manifested considerable impatience while thus occupied, being left for many hours in a wet salt-marsh, with a force which he knew to be inadequate for the purpose it was meant to fulfil. One of his comrades hearing him abuse his friend Lewars in particular, for being slow about his journey, the man answered, that he also wished the devil had him for his pains, and that Burns, in the meantime, would do well to indite a song upon the sluggard: Burns said nothing; but after taking a few strides by himself among the reeds and shingle, rejoined his party, and chanted to them this well-known ditty:—

" The de'il cam' fiddling thro' the town,
And danc'd awa' wi' the Exciseman;
And ilk auld wife cry'd, ' Auld Mahoun,
' We wish you luck o' the prize, man.

CHORUS.—' We'll mak' our maut, and brew our drink,
' We'll dance and sing and rejoice, man;
' And mony thanks to the muckle black de'il,
' That danc'd awa' wi' the Exciseman.

' There's threesome reels, and foursome reels,
' There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
' But the ae best dance e'er cam' to our lan',
' Was the deil's awa' wi' the Exciseman.' "

Lewars arrived shortly afterwards with his dragoons; and Burns, putting himself at their head, waded, sword in hand, to the brig, and was the first to board her. The crew lost heart, and submitted, though their numbers were greater than those of the assailing force. The vessel was condemned, and, with all her arms and stores, sold by auction next day at Dumfries: upon which occasion Burns, whose behaviour had been highly commended, thought fit to purchase four carronades, by way of trophy. But his glee went a step farther;—he sent the guns, with a letter, to the French Convention, requesting that body to accept of them as a mark of his admiration and respect. The present, and its accompaniment, were intercepted at the custom-house at Dover; and here, there appears to be little room to doubt, was the principal circumstance that drew on Burns the notice of his jealous superiors. We were not, it is true, at war with France; but every one knew and felt that we were to be so ere long; and nobody can pretend that Burns was not guilty, on this occasion, of a most absurd and presumptuous breach of decorum. When he learned the impression that had been created by his conduct, and its probable consequences, he wrote to his patron, Mr. Graham of Fintray, the following letter, dated December 1792:

" SIR,—I have been surprised, confounded, and distracted by Mr. Mitchell, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to government. Sir, you are a husband and a father. You know what you would feel to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced, from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas! Sir, must I think that such soon will be my lot? and from the damned dark insinuations of hellish, groundless envy too? I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deli-

berate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head. And I say that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie. To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next, after my God, I am most devoutly attached. You, Sir, have been much and generously my friend. Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you. Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependence. I would not, for my single self, call on your humanity: were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would disperse the tear that now swells in my eye; I could brave misfortune; I could face ruin; at the worst, 'death's thousand doors stand open.' But, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve courage and wither resolution! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due. To these, Sir, permit me to appeal. By these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me; and which, with my latest breath, I will say I have not deserved!"

On the 2d of January, (a week or two afterwards), we find him writing to Mrs. Dunlop in these terms:—"Mr. C. can be of little service to me at present; at least, I should be shy of applying. I cannot probably be settled as a supervisor for several years. I must wait the rotation of lists, &c. Besides, some envious malicious devil has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my superiors. I have set henceforth a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in every thing else, I shall show the undisguised emotions of my soul. War, I deprecate: misery and ruin to thousands are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But——"

"The remainder of this letter," says Cromek, "has been torn away by some barbarous hand."—There can be little doubt that it was torn away by one of the kindest hands in the world, that of Mrs. Dunlop herself, and from the most praise-worth motive.

The exact result of the Excise Board's investigation is hidden, as has been said above, in obscurity; nor is it at all likely that the cloud will be withdrawn hereafter. A general impression, however, appears to have gone forth, that the affair terminated in something which Burns himself considered as tantamount to the destruction of all hope of future promotion in his profession; and it has been insinuated by almost every one of his biographers, that the crushing of these hopes operated unhappily, even fatally, on the tone of his mind, and, in consequence, on the habits of his life. In a word, the early death of Burns has been (by implication at least) ascribed mainly to the circumstances in question. Even Sir Walter Scott has distinctly intimated his acquiescence in this prevalent notion. "The political predilections," says he, "for they could hardly be termed principles, of Burns, were entirely determined by his feelings. At his first appearance, he felt, or affected, a propensity to Jacobitism. Indeed, a youth of his warm imagination in Scotland thirty years ago, could hardly escape this bias. The side of Charles Edward was that, not surely of sound sense and sober reason, but of romantic gallantry and high achievement. The inadequacy of the means by which that prince attempted to regain the crown forfeited by his fathers, the strange and almost poetical adventures

which he underwent,—the Scottish martial character, honoured in his victories, and degraded and crushed in his defeat,—the tales of the veterans who had followed his adventurous standard, were all calculated to impress upon the mind of a poet a warm interest in the cause of the House of Stuart. Yet the impression was not of a very serious cast; for Burns himself acknowledges in one of his letters, (Reliques, p. 240), that 'to tell the matter of fact, except when my passions were heated by some accidental cause, my Jacobitism was merely by way of *vive la bagatelle.*' The same enthusiastic ardour of disposition swayed Burns in his choice of political tenets, when the country was agitated by revolutionary principles. That the poet should have chosen the side on which high talents were most likely to procure celebrity; that he to whom the fastidious distinctions of society were always odious, should have listened with complacence to the voice of French philosophy, which denounced them as usurpations on the rights of man, was precisely the thing to be expected. Yet we cannot but think, that if his superiors in the Excise department had tried the experiment of soothing rather than irritating his feelings, they might have spared themselves the *disgrace* of rendering desperate the possessor of such uncommon talents. For it is *but too certain*, that from the moment his hopes of promotion were utterly blasted, his tendency to dissipation hurried him precipitately into those excesses which shortened his life. We doubt not, that in that awful period of national discord, he had done and said enough to deter, in ordinary cases, the servants of government from countenancing an avowed partizan of faction. But this partizan was Burns! Surely the experiment of lenity might have been tried, and perhaps successfully. The conduct of Mr. Graham of Fintray, our poet's only shield against actual dismission and consequent ruin, reflects the highest credit on that gentleman."

In the general strain of sentiment in this passage, who can refuse to concur? but I am bound to say, that after a careful examination of all the documents, printed and MS., to which I have had access, I have great doubts as to some of the principal facts assumed in this eloquent statement. I have before me, for example, a letter of Mr. Findlater, formerly Collector at Glasgow, who was, at the period in question, Burns's immediate superior in the Dumfries district, in which that very respectable person distinctly says:—"I may venture to assert, that when Burns was accused of a leaning to democracy, and an inquiry into his conduct took place, he was subjected, in consequence thereof, to no more than perhaps a verbal or private caution to be more circumspect in future. Neither do I believe his promotion was thereby affected, as has been stated. That, had he lived, would, I have every reason to think, have gone on in the usual routine. His good and steady friend Mr. Graham would have attended to this. What cause, therefore, was there for depression of spirits on this account? or how should he have been hurried thereby to a premature grave? *I* never saw his spirit fail till he was borne down by the pressure of disease and bodily weakness; and even then it would occasionally revive, and like an expiring lamp, emit bright flashes to the last."

When the war had fairly broken out, a battalion of volunteers was formed in Dumfries, and Burns was an original member of the corps. It is very true that his accession was objected to by some of his neighbours; but these were over-ruled by the gentlemen who took the lead in the business, and the poet soon became, as might have been expected, the great-

est possible favourite with his brothers in arms. His commanding officer, Colonel De Peyster, attests his zealous discharge of his duties as a member of the corps; and their attachment to him was on the increase to the last. He was their laureate, and in that capacity did more good service to the government of the country, at a crisis of the darkest alarm and danger, than perhaps any one person of his rank and station, with the exception of Dibdin, had the power or the inclination to render. "Burns," says Allan Cunningham, "was a zealous lover of his country, and has stamped his patriotic feelings in many a lasting verse. . . . . His *poor and honest Sodger* laid hold at once on the public feeling, and it was everywhere sung with an enthusiasm which only began to abate when Campbell's *Exile of Erin* and *Wounded Hussar* were published. Dumfries, which sent so many of her sons to the wars, rung with it from port to port; and the poet, wherever he went, heard it echoing from house and hall. I wish this exquisite and useful song, with *Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled*,—the *Song of Death*, and *Does haughty Gaul Invasion Threat*,—all lyrics which enforce a love of country, and a martial enthusiasm into men's breasts, had obtained some reward for the poet. His perishable conversation was remembered by the rich to his prejudice—his imperishable lyrics were rewarded only by the admiration and tears of his fellow peasants."

Lastly, whatever the rebuke of the Excise Board amounted to—(Mr. James Gray, at that time schoolmaster in Dumfries, and seeing much of Burns both as the teacher of his children, and as a personal friend and associate of literary taste and talent, is the only person who gives any thing like an exact statement: and according to him, Burns was admonished "that it was his business to act, not to think")—in whatever language the censure was clothed, the Excise Board did nothing from which Burns had any cause to suppose that his hopes of ultimate promotion were extinguished. Nay, if he had taken up such a notion, rightly or erroneously, Mr. Findlater, who had him constantly under his eye, and who enjoyed all his confidence, and who enjoyed then, as he still enjoys, the utmost confidence of the Board, must have known the fact to be so. Such, I cannot help thinking, is the fair view of the case: at all events, we know that Burns, the year before he died, was permitted to *act* as a *Supervisor;* a thing not likely to have occurred had there been any resolution against promoting him in his proper order to a permanent situation of that superior rank.

On the whole, then, I am of opinion that the Excise Board have been dealt with harshly, when men of eminence have talked of their conduct to Burns as affixing *disgrace* to them. It appears that Burns, being guilty unquestionably of great indiscretion and indecorum both of word and deed, was admonished in a private manner, that at such a period of national distraction, it behoved a public officer, gifted with talents and necessarily with influence like his, very carefully to abstain from conduct which, now that passions have had time to cool, no sane man will say became his situation: that Burns's subsequent conduct effaced the unfavourable impression created in the minds of his superiors; and that he had begun to taste the fruits of their recovered approbation and confidence, ere his career was closed by illness and death. These Commissioners of Excise were themselves subordinate officers of the government, and strictly responsible for those under them. That they did try the experiment of lenity to a certain extent, appears to be made out; that *they* could have been justified in trying it to a farther extent, is at the least doubtful. But with regard to the government

of the country itself, I must say I think it is much more difficult to defend them. Mr. Pitt's ministry gave Dibdin a pension of £200 a-year for writing his Sea Songs; and one cannot help remembering, that when Burns did begin to excite the ardour and patriotism of his countrymen by such songs as Mr. Cunningham has been alluding to, there were persons who had every opportunity of representing to the Premier the claims of a greater than Dibdin. Lenity, indulgence, to whatever length carried in such quarters as these, would have been at once safe and graceful. What the minor politicians of the day thought of Burns's poetry I know not; but Mr. Pitt himself appreciated it as highly as any man. "I can think of no verse," said the great Minister, when Burns was no more—"I can think of no verse since Shakspeare's, that has so much the appearance of coming sweetly from nature." *

Had Burns put forth some newspaper squibs upon Lepaux or Carnot, or a smart pamphlet "On the State of the Country," he might have been more attended to in his lifetime. It is common to say, "what is everybody's business is nobody's business;" but one may be pardoned for thinking that in such cases as this, that which the general voice of the country does admit to be everybody's business, comes in fact to be the business of those whom the nation intrusts with national concerns.

To return to Sir Walter Scott's reviewal—it seems that he has somewhat overstated the political indiscretions of which Burns was actually guilty. Let us hear the counter-statement of Mr. Gray,† who, as has already been mentioned, enjoyed Burns's intimacy and confidence during his residence in Dumfries.—No one who ever knew anything of that excellent man, will for a moment suspect him of giving any other than what he believes to be true.

"Burns (says he) was enthusiastically fond of liberty, and a lover of the popular part of our constitution; but he saw and admired the just and delicate proportions of the political fabric, and nothing could be farther from his aim than to level with the dust the venerable pile reared by the labours and the wisdom of ages. That provision of the constitution, however, by which it is made to contain a self-correcting principle, obtained no inconsiderable share of his admiration: he was, therefore, a zealous advocate of constitutional reform. The necessity of this he often supported in conversation with all the energy of an irresistible eloquence; but there is no evidence that he ever went farther. He was a member of no political club. At the time when, in certain societies, the mad cry of revolution was raised from one end of the kingdom to the other, his voice was never heard in their debates, nor did he ever support their opinions in writing, or correspond with them in any form whatever. Though limited to an income which any other man would have considered poverty, he refused £50 a-year offered to him for a weekly article, by the proprietors of an opposition paper; and two reasons, equally honourable to him, induced him to reject this proposal. His independent spirit spurned indignantly the idea of be-

* I am assured that Mr. Pitt used these words at the table of the late Lord Liverpool, soon after Burns's death. How that event might come to be a natural topic of conversation at that table, will be seen in the sequel.

† Mr. Gray removed from the school of Dumfries to the High School of Edinburgh, in which eminent seminary he for many years laboured with distinguished success. He then became Professor of Latin in the Institution at Belfast; he afterwards entered into holy orders, and died a few years since in the East Indies, as officiating chaplain to the Company in the presidency of Madras.

coming the hireling of a party; and whatever may have been his opinion of the men and measures that then prevailed, he did not think it right to fetter the operations of that government by which he was employed."

The satement about the newspaper, refers to Mr. Perry of the Morning Chronicle, who, at the suggestion of Mr. Miller of Dalswinton, made the proposal referred to, and received for answer a letter which may be seen in the General Correspondence of our poet, and the tenor of which is in accordance with what Mr. Gray has said. Mr. Perry afterwards pressed Burns to settle in London as a regular writer for his paper, and the poet declined to do so, alleging that, however small, his Excise appointment was a certainty, which, in justice to his family, he could not think of abandoning. *

Burns, after the Excise inquiry, took care, no doubt, to avoid similar scrapes; but he had no reluctance to meddle largely and zealously in the squabbles of county politics and contested elections; and thus, by merely espousing, on all occasions, the cause of the Whig candidates, kept up very effectually the spleen which the Tories had originally conceived on tolerably legitimate grounds. One of the most celebrated of these effusions was written on a desperately contested election for the Dumfries district of boroughs, between Sir James Johnstone of Westerhall, and Mr. Miller the younger of Dalswinton; Burns, of course, maintaining the cause of his patron's family. There is much humour in it:—

THE FIVE CARLINES.

1. There were five carlines in the south, they fell upon a scheme,
To send a lad to Lunnun town to bring them tidings hame,
Nor only bring them tidings hame, but do their errands there,
And aiblins gowd and honour baith might be that laddie's share.

2. There was Maggy by the banks o' Nith, † a dame w' pride eneugh,
And Marjory o' the Monylochs, ‡ a carline auld and teugh;
And blinkin Bess o' Annandale, § that dwelt near Solway-side,
And whisky Jean that took her gill in Galloway sae wide; ||
And black Joan frae Crichton Peel, ¶ o' gipsy kith and kin,—
Five wighter carlines war na foun' the south countrie within.

3. To send a lad to Lunnun town, they met upon a day,
And mony a knight and mony a laird their errand fain wad gae,
But nae ane could their fancy please; O ne'er a ane but tway.

4. The first he was a belted knight, ** bred o' a border clan,
And he wad gae to Lunnun town, might nae man him withstan',
And he wad do their errands weel, and meikle he wad say,
And ilka ane at Lunnun court would bid to him gude day.

5. The next came in a sodger youth, †† and spak wi' modest grace,
And he wad gae to Lunnun town, if sae their pleasure was;
He wadna hecht them courtly gifts, nor meikle speech pretend,
But he wad hecht an honest heart, wad ne'er desert a friend.

6. Now, wham to choose and wham refuse, at strife thir carlines fell,
For some had gentle folks to please, and some wad please themsell.

7. Then out spak mim-mou'd Meg o' Nith, and she spak up wi' pride,
And she wad send the sodger youth, whatever might betide;
For the auld guidman o' Lunnun ‡‡ court she didna care a pin;
But she wad send the sodger youth to greet his eldest son. §§

* This is stated on the authority of Major Miller.

† Dumfries. ‡ Lachmaben. § Annan. || Kirkcudbright.
¶ Sanquhar. ** Sir J. Johnstone. †† Major Miller.
‡‡ George III. §§ The Prince of Wales.

8. Then up sprang Bess o' Annandale, and a deadly aith she's taen,
That she wad vote the border knight, though she should vote her lane;
For far-aff fowls hae feathers fair, and fools o' change are fain;
But I hae tried the border knight, and I'll try him yet again.

9. Says black Joan frae Crichton Peel, a carline stoor and grim,
The auld guidman, and the young guidman, for me may sink or swim;
For fools will freat o' right or wrang, while knaves laugh them to scorn;
But the sodger's friends hae blawn the best, so he shall bear the horn.

10. Then whisky Jean spak ower her drink, Ye weel ken, kimmers a',
The auld guidman o' Lunnun court, he's back's been at the wa';
And mony a friend that kiss't his cup, is now a fremit wight,
But it's ne'er be said o' whisky Jean—I'll send the border knight.

11. Then slow raise Marjory o' the Lochs, and wrinkled was her brow,
Her ancient weed was russet gray, her auld Scots bluid was true;
There's some great folks set light by me,—I set as light by them;
But I will sen' to Lunnun toun wham I like best at hame.

12. Sae how this weighty plea may end, nae mortal wight can tell,
God grant the King and ilka man may look weel to himsell.

The above is far the best humoured of these productions. The election to which it refers was carried in Major Miller's favour, but after a severe contest, and at a very heavy expense.

These political conflicts were not to be mingled in with impunity by the chosen laureate, wit, and orator of the district. He himself, in an unpublished piece, speaks of the terror excited by

> " ——— Burns's venom, when
> He dips in gall unmix'd his eager pen,
> And pours his vengeance in the burning line;"

and represents his victims, on one of these electioneering occasions, as leading a choral shout that

> " ——— He for his heresies in church and state,
> Might richly merit Muir's and Palmer's fate."

But what rendered him more and more the object of aversion to one set of people, was sure to connect him more strongly with the passions, and, unfortunately for himself and for us, with the pleasures of the other; and we have, among many confessions to the same purpose, the following, which I quote as the shortest, in one of the poet's letters from Dumfries to Mrs. Dunlop. " I am better, but not quite free of my complaint (he refers to the palpitation of heart.) You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me." He knew well what he was doing whenever he mingled in such debaucheries: he had, long ere this, described himself as parting " with a slice of his constitution" every time he was guilty of such excess.

This brings us back to a subject on which it can give no one pleasure to expatiate.

" Dr. Currie," says Gilbert Burns, " knowing the events of the latter years of my brother's life, only from the reports which had been propagated, and thinking it necessary, lest the candour of his work should be called in question, to state the substance of these reports, has given a very exaggerated view of the failings of my brother's life at that period, which is certainly to be regretted."—" I love Dr. Currie," says the Rev. James Gray, already more than once referred to, but I love the memory of Burns more,

and no consideration shall deter me from a bold declaration of the truth. The poet of *The Cottar's Saturday Night*, who felt all the charms of the humble piety and virtue which he sung, is charged, (in Dr. Currie's Narrative), with vices which would reduce him to a level with the most degraded of his species. As I knew him during that period of his life emphatically called his evil days, *I am enabled to speak from my own observation.* It is not my intention to extenuate his errors, because they were combined with genius; on that account, they were only the more dangerous, because the more seductive, and deserve the more severe reprehension; but I shall likewise claim that nothing may be said in malice even against him. . . . . It came under my own view professionally, that he superintended the education of his children with a degree of care that I have never seen surpassed by any parent in any rank of life whatever. In the bosom of his family he spent many a delightful hour in directing the studies of his eldest son, a boy of uncommon talents. I have frequently found him explaining to this youth, then not more than nine years of age, the English poets, from Shakspeare to Gray, or storing his mind with examples of heroic virtue, as they live in the pages of our most celebrated English historians. I would ask any person of common candour, if employments like these are consistent with *habitual drunkenness?*

"It is not denied that he sometimes mingled with society unworthy of him. He was of a social and convivial nature. He was courted by all classes of men for the fascinating powers of his conversation, but over his social scene uncontrolled passion never presided. Over the social bowl, his wit flashed for hours together, penetrating whatever it struck, like the fire from heaven; but even in the hour of thoughtless gaity and merriment, I never knew it tainted by indecency. It was playful or caustic by turns, following an allusion through all its windings; astonishing by its rapidity, or amusing by its wild originality, and grotesque, yet natural combinations, but never, within my observation, disgusting by its grossness. In his morning hours, I never saw him like one suffering from the effects of last night's intemperance. He appeared then clear and unclouded. He was the eloquent advocate of humanity, justice, and political freedom. From his paintings, virtue appeared more lovely, and piety assumed a more celestial mien. While his keen eye was pregnant with fancy and feeling, and his voice attuned to the very passion which he wished to communicate, it would hardly have been possible to conceive any being more interesting and delightful. I may likewise add, that to the very end of his life, reading was his favourite amusement. I have never known any man so intimately acquainted with the elegant English authors. He seemed to have the poets by heart. The prose authors he could quote either in their own words, or clothe their ideas in language more beautiful than their own. Nor was there ever any decay in any of the powers of his mind. To the last day of his life, his judgment, his memory, his imagination, were fresh and vigorous, as when he composed *The Cottar's Saturday Night.* The truth is, that Burns was seldom *intoxicated.* The drunkard soon becomes besotted, and is shunned even by the convivial. Had he been so, he could not long have continued the idol of every party. It will be freely confessed, that the hour of enjoyment was often prolonged beyond the limit marked by prudence; but what man will venture to affirm, that in situations where he was conscious of giving so much pleasure, he could at all times have listened to her voice?

" The men with whom he generally associated, were not of the lowest order. He numbered among his intimate friends, many of the most respectable inhabitants of Dumfries and the vicinity. Several of those were attached to him by ties that the hand of calumny, busy as it was, could never snap asunder. They admired the poet for his genius, and loved the man for the candour, generosity, and kindness of his nature. His early friends clung to him through good and bad report, with a zeal and fidelity that prove their disbelief of the malicious stories circulated to his disadvantage. Among them were some of the most distinguished characters in this country, and not a few females, eminent for delicacy, taste, and genius. They were proud of his friendship, and cherished him to the last moment of his existence. He was endeared to them even by his misfortunes, and they still retain for his memory that affectionate veneration which virtue alone inspires."

Part of Mr. Gray's letter is omitted, only because it touches on subjects, as to which Mr. Findlater's statement must be considered as of not merely sufficient, but the very highest authority.

" My connexion with Robert Burns," says that most respectable man, " commenced immediately after his admission into the Excise, and continued to the hour of his death. * In all that time, the superintendence of his behaviour, as an officer of the revenue, was a branch of my especial province, and it may be supposed that I would not be an inattentive observer of the *general* conduct of a man and a poet, so celebrated by his countrymen. In the former capacity, he was exemplary in his attention; and was even jealous of the least imputation on his vigilance: as a proof of which, it may not be foreign to the subject to quote a part of a letter from him to myself, in a case of only *seeming* inattention.—' I know, Sir, and regret deeply, that this business glances with a malign aspect on my character as an officer; but, as I am really innocent in the affair, and as the gentleman is known to be an illicit dealer, and particularly as this is the *single* instance of the least shadow of carelessnes or impropriety in my conduct as an officer, I shall be peculiarly unfortunate if my character shall fall a sacrifice to the dark manœuvres of a smuggler.'—This of itself affords more than a presumption of his attention to business, as it cannot be supposed he would have written in such a style *to me*, but from the impulse of a conscious rectitude in this department of his duty. Indeed, it was not till near the latter end of his days that there was any falling off in this respect; and this was amply accounted for in the pressure of disease and accumulating infirmities. I will further avow, that I never saw him, which was very frequently while he lived at Ellisland, and still more so, almost every day, after he removed to Dumfries, but in hours of business he was quite himself, and capable of discharging the duties of his office; nor was he ever known to drink by himself, or seen to indulge in the use of liquor in a forenoon. . . . I have seen Burns in all his various phases, in his convivial moments, in his sober moods, and in the bosom of his family; indeed, I believe I saw more of him than any other individual had occasion to see, after he became an Excise officer, and I never beheld any thing like the gross enormities with which he is now charged: That when set down in an evening with a few friends whom he liked, he was apt to prolong the social hour beyond the bounds which prudence would dictate, is unques-

* Mr. Findlater watched by Burns the night before he died.

tionable; but in his family, I will venture to say, he was never seen otherwise than attentive and affectionate to a high degree."

These statements are entitled to every consideration: they come from men altogether incapable, for any purpose, of wilfully stating that which they know to be untrue.

To whatever Burns's excesses amounted, they were, it is obvious, and that frequently, the subject of rebuke and remonstrance even from his own dearest friends. That such reprimands should have been received at times with a strange mixture of remorse and indignation, none that have considered the nervous susceptibility and haughtiness of Burns's character can hear with surprise. But this was only when the good advice was oral. No one knew better than he how to answer the written homilies of such persons as were most likely to take the freedom of admonishing him on points of such delicacy; nor is there any thing in all his correspondence more amusing than his reply to a certain solemn lecture of William Nicoll. . . "O thou, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors! how infinitely is thy puddle-headed, rattle-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy supereminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zig-zag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units, up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, straight as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration, may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favour of that father of proverbs and master of maxims, that antipod of folly, and magnet among the sages, the wise and witty Willy Nicoll! Amen! amen! Yea, so be it!

"For me! I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing!" &c. &c. &c.

To how many that have moralized over the life and death of Burns, might not such a *Tu quoque* be addressed!

The strongest argument in favour of those who denounce the statements of Heron, Currie, and their fellow biographers, concerning the habits of the poet, during the latter years of his career, as culpably and egregiously exaggerated, still remains to be considered. On the whole, Burns gave satisfaction by his manner of executing the duties of his station in the revenue service; he, moreover, as Mr. Gray tells us, (and upon this ground Mr. Gray could not possibly be mistaken), took a lively interest in the education of his children, and spent more hours in their private tuition than fathers who have more leisure than his excisemanship left him, are often in the custom of so bestowing.—"He was a kind and attentive father, and took great delight in spending his evenings in the cultivation of the minds of his children. Their education was the grand object of his life, and he did not, like most parents, think it sufficient to send them to public schools; he was their private instructor, and even at that early age, bestowed great pains in training their minds to habits of thought and reflection, and in keeping them pure from every form of vice. This he considered as a sacred duty, and never, to the period of his last illness, relaxed in his diligence. With his eldest son, a boy of not more than nine years of age, he had read many of the favourite poets, and some of the best historians in our language; and what is more remarkable, gave him considerable aid in the study of Latin. This boy attended the Grammar School of Dumfries,

and soon attracted my notice by the strength of his talent, and the ardour of his ambition. Before he had been a year at school, I thought it right to advance him a form, and he began to read Cæsar, and gave me translations of that author of such beauty as I confess surprised me. On inquiry, I found that his father made him turn over his dictionary, till he was able to translate to him the passage in such a way that he could gather the author's meaning, and that it was to him he owed that polished and forcible English with which I was so greatly struck. I have mentioned this incident merely to show what minute attention he paid to this important branch of parental duty." * Lastly, although to all men's regret he wrote, after his removal to Dumfriesshire, only one poetical piece of considerable length, (*Tam o' Shanter*), his epistolary correspondence, and his songs to Johnson's Museum, and to the collection of Mr. George Thomson, furnish undeniable proof that, in whatever *fits* of dissipation he unhappily indulged, he never could possibly have sunk into any thing like that habitual grossness of manners and sottish degradation of mind, which the writers in question have not hesitated to hold up to the commiseration of mankind.

Of his letters written at Elliesland and Dumfries, nearly three octavo volumes have been already printed by Currie and Cromek; and it would be easy to swell the collection to double this extent. Enough, however, has been published to enable every reader to judge for himself of the character of Burns's style of epistolary composition. The severest criticism bestowed on it has been, that it is too elaborate—that, however natural the feelings, the expression is frequently more studied and artificial than belongs to that species of composition. Be this remark altogether just in point of taste, or otherwise, the fact on which it is founded, furnishes strength to our present position. The poet produced in these years a great body of elaborate prose-writing.

We have already had occasion to notice some of his contributions to Johnson's Museum. He continued to the last month of his life to take a lively interest in that work; and besides writing for it some dozens of excellent original songs, his diligence in collecting ancient pieces hitherto unpublished, and his taste and skill in eking out fragments, were largely, and most happily exerted, all along, for its benefit. Mr. Cromek saw among Johnson's papers, no fewer than 184 of the pieces which enter into the collection, in Burns's handwriting.

His connexion with the more important work of Mr. Thomson commenced in September 1792; and Mr. Gray justly says, that whoever considers his correspondence with the editor, and the collection itself, must be satisfied, that from that time till the commencement of his last illness, not many days ever passed over his head without the production of some new stanzas for its pages. Besides old materials, for the most part embellished with lines, if not verses of his own, and a whole body of hints, suggestions, and criticisms, Burns gave Mr. Thomson about sixty original songs. The songs in this collection are by many eminent critics placed decidedly at the head of all our poet's performances: it is by none disputed that very many of them are worthy of his most felicitous inspiration. He bestowed much more care on them than on his contributions to the Museum; and the taste and feeling of the editor secured the work against any intrusions of that over-warm element which was too apt to mingle in his amatory ef-

* Letter from the Rev. James Gray to Mr. Gilbert Burns. See his Edition, vol. I. Appendix, No. v.

fusions. Burns knew that he was now engaged on a work destined for the eye and ear of refinement; he laboured throughout, under the salutary feeling, "virginibus puerisque canto;" and the consequences have been happy indeed for his own fame—for the literary taste, and the national music, of Scotland; and, what is of far higher importance, the moral and national feelings of his countrymen.

In almost all these productions—certainly in all that deserve to be placed in the first rank of his compositions—Burns made use of his native dialect. He did so, too, in opposition to the advice of almost all the lettered correspondents he had—more especially of Dr. Moore, who, in his own novels, never ventured on more than a few casual specimens of Scottish colloquy—following therein the example of his illustrious predecessor Smollett; and not foreseeing that a triumph over English prejudice, which Smollett might have achieved, had he pleased to make the effort, was destined to be the prize of Burns's perseverance in obeying the dictates of native taste and judgment. Our poet received such suggestions, for the most part, in silence—not choosing to argue with others on a matter which concerned only his own feelings; but in writing to Mr. Thomson, he had no occasion either to conceal or disguise his sentiments. "These English songs," says he, "gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue;"* and again, "so much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand at it in Scots verse. There I am always most at home." †—He, besides, would have considered it as a sort of national crime to do any thing that must tend to divorce the music of his native land from her peculiar idiom. The "genius loci" was never worshipped more fervently than by Burns. "I am such an enthusiast," says he, "that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise, *Lochaber* and the *Braes of Ballenden* excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scottish Muse." With such feelings, he was not likely to touch with an irreverent hand the old fabric of our national song, or to meditate a lyrical revolution for the pleasure of strangers. "There is," says he, ‡ "a naiveté, a pastoral simplicity in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste), with the simple pathos or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever. One hint more let me give you:—Whatever Mr. Pleyel does, let him not alter one *iota* of the original airs; I mean in the song department; but let our Scottish national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect." §

Of the delight with which Burns laboured for Mr. Thomson's Collection, his letters contain some lively descriptions. "You cannot imagine," says he, 7th April 1793, "how much this business has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book and ballad-

* Correspondence with Mr. Thomson, p. 111. † Ibid. p. 80. ‡ Ibid. p. 36.

§ It may amuse the reader to hear, that in spite of all Burns's success in the use of his native dialect, even an eminently spirited bookseller to whom the manuscript of Waverley was submitted, hesitated for some time about publishing it, on account of the Scots dialogue interwoven in the novel.

making are now as completely my hobbyhorse as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race, (God grant I may take the right side of the winning-post), and then, cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say or sing, 'Sae merry as we a' hae been,' and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of Coila shall be 'Good night, and joy be wi' you, a'.'" *

"Until I am complete master of a tune in my own singing, such as it is, I can never," says Burns, "compose for it. My way is this: I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression,—then choose my theme,—compose one stanza. When that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down now and then,—look out for objects in nature round me that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom,—humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.—What cursed egotism!" †

In this correspondence with Mr. Thomson, and in Cromek's later publication, the reader will find a world of interesting details about the particular circumstances under which these immortal songs were severally written. They are all, or almost all, in fact, part and parcel of the poet's personal history. No man ever made his muse more completely the companion of his own individual life. A new flood of light has just been poured on the same subject, in Mr. Allan Cunningham's "Collection of Scottish Songs;" unless, therefore, I were to transcribe volumes, and all popular volumes too, it is impossible to go into the details of this part of the poet's history. The reader must be contented with a few general *memoranda; e. g.*

"Do you think that the sober gin-horse routine of existence could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy,—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos equal to the genius of your book? No, no. Whenever I want to be more than ordinary *in song*—to be in some degree equal to your divine airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire.* I have a glorious recipe, the very one that for his own use was invented by the Divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus,—I put myself on a regimen of admiring a fine woman." ‡

"I can assure you I was never more in earnest.—Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel, and highly venerate; but, somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where love is liberty, and nature law."

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument, of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my

* Correspondence with Mr. Thomson, p. 57. † Ibid. p. 119. ‡ Ibid. p. 174.

soul; and—whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever raptures they might give me—yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forbids, and generosity disdains the purchase." *

Of all Burns's love songs, the best, in his own opinion, was that which begins,

"Yestreen I had a pint o' wine,
A place where body saw na'."

Mr. Cunningham says, "if the poet thought so, I am sorry for it;" while the Reverend Hamilton Paul fully concurs in the author's own estimate of the performance.

There is in the same collection a love song, which unites the suffrages, and ever will do so, of all men. It has furnished Byron with a motto, and Scott has said that that motto is "worth a thousand romances."

"Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly,
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted."

There are traditions which connect Burns with the heroines of these bewitching songs.

I envy no one the task of inquiring minutely in how far these traditions rest on the foundation of truth. They refer at worst to occasional errors. "Many insinuations," says Mr. Gray, "have been made against the poet's character as a husband, but without the slightest proof; and I might pass from the charge with that neglect which it merits; but I am happy to say that I have in exculpation the direct evidence of Mrs. Burns herself, who, among many amiable and respectable qualities, ranks a veneration for the memory of her departed husband, whom she never names but in terms of the profoundest respect and the deepest regret, to lament his misfortunes, or to extol his kindnesses to herself, not as the momentary overflowings of the heart in a season of penitence for offences generously forgiven, but an habitual tenderness, which ended only with his life. I place this evidence, which I am proud to bring forward on her own authority, against a thousand anonymous calumnies." †

Among the effusions, not amatory, which our poet contributed to Mr. Thomson's Collection, the famous song of Bannockburn holds the first place. We have already seen in how lively a manner Burns's feelings were kindled when he visited that glorious field. According to tradition, the tune played when Bruce led his troops to the charge, was "Hey tuttie tattie;" and it was humming this old air as he rode by himself through Glenken, a wild district in Galloway, during a terrific storm of wind and rain, that the poet composed his immortal lyric in its first and noblest form. This is one more instance of his delight in the sterner aspects of nature.

"Come, winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree—"

"There is hardly," says he in one of his letters, "there is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure

* Correspondence with Mr. Thomson, p. 191.
† Letter in Gilbert Burns's Edition, vol. I. Appendix, p. 437.

—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of a wood in a cloudy winter day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him*, who, to use the pompous language of the Hebrew Bard, 'walks on the wings of the wind.'"—To the last, his best poetry was produced amidst scenes of solemn desolation.

CHAPTER IX.

CONTENTS.—*The poet's mortal period approaches—His peculiar temperament—Symptoms of premature old age—These not diminished by narrow circumstances, by chagrin from neglect, and by the death of a Daughter—The poet misses public patronage: and even the fair fruits of his own genius—the appropriation of which is debated for the casuists who yielded to him merely the shell—His magnanimity when death is at hand; his interviews, conversations, and addresses as a dying man—Dies, 21st July 1796—Public funeral, at which many attend, and amongst the rest the future Premier of England, who had steadily refused to acknowledge the poet, living—His family munificently provided for by the public—Analysis of character—His integrity, religious state, and genius—Strictures upon him and his writings by Scott, Campbell, Byron, and others.*

"I dread thee, Fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear."

WE are drawing near the close of this great poet's mortal career; and I would fain hope the details of the last chapter may have prepared the humane reader to contemplate it with sentiments of sorrow, pure and undebased with any considerable intermixture of less genial feelings.

For some years before Burns was lost to his country, it is sufficiently plain that he had been, on political grounds, an object of suspicion and distrust to a large portion of the population that had most opportunity of observing him. The mean subalterns of party had, it is very easy to suppose, delighted in decrying him on pretexts, good, bad, and indifferent, equally—to their superiors; and hence, who will not willingly believe it? the temporary and local prevalence of those extravagantly injurious reports, the essence of which Dr. Currie, no doubt, thought it his duty, as a biographer, to extract and circulate.

A gentleman of that county, whose name I have already more than once had occasion to refer to, has often told me, that he was seldom more grieved, than when riding into Dumfries one fine summer's evening, about this time, to attend a county ball, he saw Burns walking alone, on the shady side of the principal street of the town, while the opposite side was gay with successive groups of gentlemen and ladies, all drawn together for the festivities of the night, not one of whom appeared willing to recognize him. The horseman dismounted and joined Burns, who, on his proposing to him to cross the street, said, "Nay, nay, my young friend,—that's all over now;" and quoted, after a pause, some verses of Lady Grizzel Baillie's pathetic ballad,—

"His bonnet stood ance fu' fair on his brow,
His auld ane look'd better than mony ane's new;
But now he lets't wear ony way it will hing,
And casts himsell dowie upon the corn-bing.

" O were we young, as we ance hae been,
We sud hae been galloping doun on yon green,
And linking it ower the lilywhite lea,—
And werena my heart light I wad die."

It was little in Burns's character to let his feelings on certain subjects, escape in this fashion. He, immediately after citing these verses, assumed the sprightliness of his most pleasing manner; and taking his young friend home with him, entertained him very agreeably until the hour of the ball arrived, with a bowl of his usual potation, and Bonnie Jean's singing of some verses which he had recently composed.

The untimely death of one who, had he lived to any thing like the usual term of human existence, might have done so much to increase his fame as a poet, and to purify and dignify his character as a man, was, it is too probable, hastened by his own intemperances and imprudences: but it seems to be extremely improbable, that, even if his manhood had been a course of saintlike virtue in all respects, the irritable and nervous bodily constitution which he inherited from his father, shaken as it was by the toils and miseries of his ill-starred youth, could have sustained, to any thing like the psalmist's " allotted span," the exhausting excitements of an intensely poetical temperament. Since the first pages of this narrative were sent to the press, I have heard from an old acquaintance of the bard, who often shared his bed with him at Mossgiel, that even at that early period, when intemperance assuredly had had nothing to do with the matter, those ominous symptoms of radical disorder in the digestive system, the " palpitation and suffocation" of which Gilbert speaks, were so regularly his nocturnal visitants, that it was his custom to have a great tub of cold water by his bedside, into which he usually plunged more than once in the course of the night, thereby procuring instant, though but shortlived relief. On a frame thus originally constructed, and thus early tried with most severe afflictions, external and internal, what must not have been, under any subsequent course of circumstances, the effect of that exquisite sensibility of mind, but for which the world would never have heard any thing either of the sins, or the sorrows, or the poetry of Burns!

" The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe," * (thus writes the poet himself), " often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to be melancholy. There is not, among all the martyrologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets.—In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind, give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which between them will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions, than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as, arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the paths of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living for the pleasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet."

* Letter to Miss Chalmers in 1793.

In these few short sentences, as it appears to me, Burns has traced his own character far better than any one else has done it since.—But with this lot what pleasures were not mingled?—" To you, Madam," he proceeds, " I need not recount the fairy pleasures the muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the counsels of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baiting them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin; yet, where is the man but must own that all our happiness on earth is not worthy the name—that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of pardisiacal bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun, rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures, that we owe to the lovely Queen of the heart of man!"

It is common to say of those who over-indulge themselves in material stimulants, that they *live fast;* what wonder that the career of the poet's thick-coming fancies should, in the immense majority of cases, be rapid too?

That Burns *lived fast,* in both senses of the phrase, we have abundant evidence from himself; and that the more earthly motion was somewhat accelerated as it approached the close, we may believe, without finding it at all necessary to mingle anger with our sorrow. " Even in his earliest poems," as Mr. Wordsworth says, in a beautiful passage of his letter to Mr. Gray, " through the veil of assumed habits and pretended qualities, enough of the real man appears to show, that he was conscious of sufficient cause to dread his own passions, and to bewail his errors! We have rejected as false sometimes in the latter, and of necessity as false in the spirit, many of the testimonies that others have borne against him:—but, by his own hand—in words the import of which cannot be mistaken—it has been recorded that the order of his life but faintly corresponded with the clearness of his views. It is probable that he would have proved a still greater poet if, by strength of reason, he could have controlled the propensities which his sensibility engendered; but he would have been a poet of a different class: and certain it is, had that desirable restraint been early established, many peculiar beauties which enrich his verses could never have existed, and many accessary influences, which contribute greatly to their effect, would have been wanting. For instance, the momentous truth of the passage—

" One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it:
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentlier sister woman—
Though they may gang a kennin' wrang;
To step aside is human,"

could not possibly have been conveyed with such pathetic force by any poet that ever lived, speaking in his own voice; unless it were felt that, like Burns, he was a man who preached from the text of his own errors; and whose wisdom, beautiful as a flower that might have risen from seed sown from above, was in fact a scion from the root of personal suffering."

In how far the " thoughtless follies" of the poet did actually hasten his end, it is needless to conjecture. They had their share, unquestionably, along with other influences which it would be inhuman to characterise as

mere follies—such, for example, as that general depression of spirits which haunted him from his youth, and, in all likelihood, sat more heavily on such a being as Burns than a man of plain common sense might guess,—or even a casual expression of discouraging tendency from the persons on whose good-will all hopes of substantial advancement in the scale of worldly promotion depended,—or that *partial* exclusion from the species of society our poet had been accustomed to adorn and delight, which, from however inadequate causes, certainly did occur during some of the latter years of his life.—All such sorrows as these must have acted with twofold tyranny upon Burns; harassing, in the first place, one of the most sensitive minds that ever filled a human bosom, and, alas! by consequence, tempting to additional excesses. How he struggled against the tide of his misery, let the following letter speak.—It was written February 25, 1794, and addressed to Mr. Alexander Cunningham, an eccentric being, but generous and faithful in his friendship to Burns, and, when Burns was no more, to his family.—"Canst thou minister," says the poet, "to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tost on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame, tremblingly alive as the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why would'st thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me? For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these ***** times—losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition. Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. A heart at ease would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility. Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which, however the sceptic may deny, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to those awful obscure realities—an all-powerful and equally beneficent God—and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field;—the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

"I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW, to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know any thing of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to

others, were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift, delighted degrees, is rapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson,

> 'These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
> Are but the varied God.—The rolling year
> Is full of Thee;'

and so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn.—These are no ideal pleasures; they are real delights; and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say, equal to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God."

They who have been told that Burns was ever a degraded being—who have permitted themselves to believe that his only consolations were those of "the opiate guilt applies to grief," will do well to pause over this noble letter and judge for themselves. The enemy under which he was destined to sink, had already beaten in the outworks of his constitution when these lines were penned. The reader has already had occasion to observe, that Burns had in those closing years of his life to struggle almost continually with pecuniary difficulties, than which nothing could have been more likely to pour bitterness intolerable into the cup of his existence. His lively imagination exaggerated to itself every real evil; and this among, and perhaps above, all the rest; at least, in many of his letters we find him alluding to the probability of his being arrested for debts, which we now know to have been of very trivial amount at the worst, which we also know he himself lived to discharge to the utmost farthing, and in regard to which it is impossible to doubt that his personal friends in Dumfries would have at all times been ready to prevent the law taking its ultimate course. This last consideration, however, was one which would have given slender relief to Burns. How he shrunk with horror and loathing from the sense of pecuniary obligation, no matter to whom, we have had abundant indications already.

The following extract from one of his letters to Mr. Macmurdo, dated December 1793, will speak for itself:—"Sir, it is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man.—Here is Ker's account, and here are six guineas; and now, I don't owe a shilling to man, or woman either. But for these damned dirty, dog's-eared little pages, (bank-notes), I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality has laid

me under, the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too, was more than I could face.

The question naturally arises: Burns was all this while pouring out his beautiful songs for the Museum of Johnson and the greater work of Thomson; how did he happen to derive no pecuniary advantages from this continual exertion of his genius in a form of composition so eminently calculated for popularity? Nor, indeed, is it an easy matter to answer this very obvious question. The poet himself, in a letter to Mr. Carfrae, dated 1789, speaks thus:—"The profits of the labours of a man of genius are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr. Mylne's relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest which fate has denied himself to reap." And yet, so far from looking to Mr. Johnson for any pecuniary remuneration for the very laborious part he took in his work, it appears from a passage in Cromek's Reliques, that the poet asked a single copy of the Museum to give to a fair friend, by way of a great favour to himself—and that that copy and his own were really all he ever received at the hands of the publisher. Of the secret history of Johnson and his book I know nothing; but the Correspondence of Burns with Mr. Thomson contains curious enough details concerning his connexion with that gentleman's more important undertaking. At the outset, September 1792, we find Mr. Thomson saying, "We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall please to demand for it. Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to save neither pains nor expense on the publication." To which Burns replies immediately, "As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright prostitution of soul. A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, *Gude speed the wark.*" The next time we meet with any hint as to money matters in the Correspondence is in a letter of Mr. Thomson, 1st July 1793, where he says, "I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done: as I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to enclose a small mark of my gratitude, and to repeat it afterwards when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by Heaven, if you do, our correspondence is at an end." To which letter (it inclosed £5) Burns thus replies:—"I assure you, my dear Sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that honour which crowns the upright statue of Robert Burns's integrity—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you. Burns's character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants which the cold unfeeling ore can supply: at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve."—In November 1794, we find Mr. Thomson writing to Burns, "Do not, I beseech you, return any books."—In May 1795, "You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me;" (this was a drawing of *The Cottar's Saturday Night*,

by Allan); "I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem and respect you, for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you. So I beg you would not make a fool of me again by speaking of obligation." In February 1796, we have Burns acknowledging a "handsome elegant present to Mrs. B——," which was a worsted shawl. Lastly, on the 12th July of the same year, (that is, little more than a week before Burns died), he writes to Mr. Thomson in these terms:—"After all my boasted independence, cursed necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel . . . . . of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallibly put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness; but the horrors of a jail have put me half distracted.—I do not ask this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the neatest song genius you have seen." To which Mr. Thomson replies—"Ever since I received your melancholy letter by Mrs. Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer; but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure enclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were Chancellor of the Exchequer but one day for your sake!——Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? . . . . . Do not shun this method of obtaining the value of your labour; remember Pope published the *Iliad* by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not think me intrusive with my advice."

Such are the details of this matter, as recorded in the correspondence of the two individuals concerned. Some time after Burns's death, Mr. Thomson was attacked on account of his behaviour to the poet, in a novel called *Nubilia*. In Professor Walker's Memoirs of Burns, which appeared in 1816, Mr. Thomson took the opportunity of defending himself thus:—

"I have been attacked with much bitterness, and accused of not endeavouring to remunerate Burns for the songs which he wrote for my collection; although there is the clearest evidence of the contrary, both in the printed correspondence between the poet and me, and in the public testimony of Dr. Currie. My assailant, too, without knowing any thing of the matter, states, that I had enriched myself by the labours of Burns; and, of course, that my want of generosity was inexcusable. Now, the fact is, that notwithstanding the united labours of all the men of genius who have enriched my collection, I am not even yet compensated for the precious time consumed by me in poring over musty volumes, and in corresponding with every amateur and poet by whose means I expected to make any valuable additions to our national music and song;—for the exertion and money it cost me to obtain accompaniments from the greatest masters of harmony in Vienna;—and for the sums paid to engravers, printers, and others. On this subject, the testimony of Mr. Preston in London, a man of unquestionable and well-known character, who has printed the music for every copy of my work, may be more satisfactory than any thing I can say: In August 1809, he wrote me as follows: 'I am concerned at the very unwarrantable attack which has been made upon you by the author

of *Nubilia;* nothing could be more unjust than to say you had enriched yourself by Burns's labours; for the whole concern, though it includes the labours of Haydn, has scarcely afforded a compensation for the various expenses, and for the time employed on the work. When a work obtains any celebrity, publishers are generally supposed to derive a profit ten times beyond the reality; the sale is greatly magnified, and the expenses are not in the least taken into consideration. It is truly vexatious to be so grossly and scandalously abused for conduct, the very reverse of which has been manifest through the whole transaction.'—Were I the sordid man that the anonymous author calls me, I had a most inviting opportunity to profit much more than I did by the lyrics of our great bard. He had written above fifty songs expressly for my work; they were in my possession unpublished at his death; I had the right and the power of retaining them till I should be ready to publish them; but when I was informed that an edition of the poet's works was projected for the benefit of his family, I put them in immediate possession of the whole of his songs, as well as letters, and thus enabled Dr. Currie to complete the four volumes which were sold for the family's behoof to Messrs. Cadell and Davies. And I have the satisfaction of knowing, that the most zealous friends of the family, Mr. Cunninghame, Mr. Syme, and Dr. Currie, and the poet's own brother, considered my sacrifice of the prior right of publishing the songs, as no ungrateful return for the disinterested and liberal conduct of the poet. Accordingly, Mr. Gilbert Burns, in a letter to me, which alone might suffice for an answer to all the novelist's abuse, thus expresses himself:—'If ever I come to Edinburgh, I will certainly call on a person whose handsome conduct to my brother's family has secured my esteem, and confirmed me in the opinion, that musical taste and talents have a close connexion with the harmony of the moral feelings.' Nothing is farther from my thoughts than to claim any merit for what I did. I never would have said a word on the subject, but for the harsh and groundless accusation which has been brought forward, either by ignorance or animosity, and which I have long suffered to remain unnoticed, from my great dislike to any public appearance."

This statement of Mr. Thomson supersedes the necessity of any additional remarks, (writes Professor Walker). When the public is satisfied; when the relations of Burns are grateful; and, above all, when the delicate mind of Mr. Thomson is at peace with itself in contemplating his conduct, there can be no necessity for a nameless novelist to contradict them.

So far, Mr. Walker:—Why Burns, who was of opinion, when he wrote his letter to Mr. Carfrae, that "no profits are more honourable than those of the labours of a man of genius," and whose own notions of independence had sustained no shock in the receipt of hundreds of pounds from Creech, should have spurned the suggestion of pecuniary recompense from Thomson, it is no easy matter to explain: nor do I profess to understand why Mr. Thomson took so little pains to argue the matter *in limine* with the poet, and convince him, that the time which he himself considered as fairly entitled to be paid for by a common bookseller, ought of right to be valued and acknowledged on similar terms by the editor and proprietor of a book containing both songs and music. They order these things differently now: a living lyric poet whom none will place in a higher rank than Burns, has long, it is understood, been in the habit of receiving about as much money annually for an *annual* handful of songs, as was ever paid to our bard for the whole body of his writings.

Of the increasing irritability of our poet's temperament, amidst those troubles, external and internal, that preceded his last illness, his letters furnish proofs, to dwell on which could only inflict unnecessary pain. Let one example suffice.—" Sunday closes a period of our curst revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen! Here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a d—— melange of fretfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor; my soul flouncing and fluttering round her tenement, like a wild finch, caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he foretold—' And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!' Pray that wisdom and bliss be more frequent visitors of R. B."

Towards the close of 1795 Burns was, as has been previously mentioned, employed as an acting Supervisor of Excise. This was apparently a step to a permanent situation of that higher and more lucrative class; and from thence, there was every reason to believe, the kind patronage of Mr. Graham might elevate him yet farther. These hopes, however, were mingled and darkened with sorrow. For four months of that year his youngest child lingered through an illness of which every week promised to be the last; and she was finally cut off when the poet, who had watched her with anxious tenderness, was from home on professional business. This was a severe blow, and his own nerves, though as yet he had not taken any serious alarm about his ailments, were ill fitted to withstand it.

" There had need," he writes to Mrs. Dunlop, 15th December, " there had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate, even in all the vigour of manhood as I am, such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock! 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune.—A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject."

To the same lady, on the 29th of the month, he, after mentioning his supervisorship, and saying that at last his political sins seemed to be forgiven him—goes on in this ominous tone—" What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but t'other day a young man; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast over my frame." We may trace the melancholy sequel in the few following extracts.

" 31*st January* 1796.—I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until, after many weeks of a sick-bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

" When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear, the untried night,
That shuts, for ever shuts ! life's doubtful day."

But a few days after this, Burns was so exceedingly imprudent as to join a festive circle at a tavern dinner, where he remained till about three in the morning. The weather was severe, and he, being much intoxicated, took no precaution in thus exposing his debilitated frame to its influence. It has been said, that he fell asleep upon the snow on his way home. It is certain, that next morning he was sensible of an icy numbness through all his joints—that his rheumatism returned with tenfold force upon him—and that from that unhappy hour, his mind brooded ominously on the fatal issue. The course of medicine to which he submitted was violent; confinement, accustomed as he had been to much bodily exercise, preyed miserably on all his powers; he drooped visibly, and all the hopes of his friends, that health would return with summer, were destined to disappointment.

" *4th June* 1796.*—I am in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of showing my loyalty in any way. Rackt as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak and Balaam,—' Come curse me Jacob; and come defy me Israel.' "

" *7th July.*—I fear the voice of the Bard will soon be heard among you no more.—For these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bed-fast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me—pale, emaciated, and so feeble, as occasionally to need help from my chair.—My spirits fled ! fled ! But I can no more on the subject."

This last letter was addressed to Mr. Cunningham of Edinburgh, from the small village of Brow on the Solway Frith, about ten miles from Dumfries, to which the poet removed about the end of June; " the medical folks," as he says, " having told him that his last and only chance was bathing, country quarters, and riding." In separating himself by their advice from his family for these purposes, he carried with him a heavy burden of care. " The duce of the matter," he writes, " is this; when an exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced. What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country quarters on £35 ?" He implored his friends in Edinburgh, to make interest with the Board to grant him his full salary; if they do not, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poete*—if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger."

Mrs. Riddell of Glenriddel, a beautiful and very accomplished woman, to whom many of Burns's most interesting letters, in the latter years of his life, were addressed, happened to be in the neighbourhood of Brow when Burns reached his bathing quarters, and exerted herself to make him as comfortable as circumstances permitted. Having sent her carriage for his conveyance, the poet visited her on the 5th July; and she has, in a letter published by Dr. Currie, thus described his appearance and conversation on that occasion :—

" I was struck with his appearance on entering the room. The stamp of death was impressed on his features. He seemed already touching the brink of eternity. His first salutation was, ' Well, Madam, have you any

* The birth-day of George III.

commands for the other world?' I replied that it seemed a doubtful case which of us should be there soonest, and that I hoped he would yet live to write my epitaph. (I was then in a poor state of health.) He looked in my face with an air of great kindness, and expressed his concern at seeing me look so ill, with his accustomed sensibility. At table he ate little or nothing, and he complained of having entirely lost the tone of his stomach. We had a long and serious conversation about his present situation, and the approaching termination of all his earthly prospects. He spoke of his death without any of the ostentation of philosophy, but with firmness as well as feeling—as an event likely to happen very soon, and which gave him concern chiefly from leaving his four children so young and unprotected, and his wife in so interesting a situation—in the hourly expectation of lying-in of a fifth. . He mentioned, with seeming pride and satisfaction, the promising genius of his eldest son, and the flattering marks of approbation he had received from his teachers, and dwelt particularly on his hopes of that boy's future conduct and merit. His anxiety for his family seemed to hang heavy upon him, and the more perhaps from the reflection that he had not done them all the justice he was so well qualified to do. Passing from this subject, he showed great concern about the care of his literary fame, and particularly the publication of his posthumous works. He said he was well aware that his death would occasion some noise, and that every scrap of his writings would be revived against him to the injury of his future reputation: that letters and verses written with unguarded and improper freedom, and which he earnestly wished to have buried in oblivion, would be handed about by idle vanity or malevolence, when no dread of his resentment would restrain them, or prevent the censures of shrill-tongued malice, or the insidious sarcasms of envy, from pouring forth all their venom to blast his fame. He lamented that he had written many epigrams on persons against whom he entertained no enmity, and whose characters he should be sorry to wound; and many indifferent poetical pieces, which he feared would now, with all their imperfections on their head, be thrust upon the world. On this account he deeply regretted having deferred to put his papers into a state of arrangement, as he was now quite incapable of the exertion.—The conversation was kept up with great evenness and animation on his side. I have seldom seen his mind greater or more collected. There was frequently a considerable degree of vivacity in his sallies, and they would probably have had a greater share, had not the concern and dejection I could not disguise, damped the spirit of pleasantry he seemed not unwilling to indulge.—We parted about sun-set on the evening of that day (the 5th of July 1796); the next day I saw him again, and we parted to meet no more!"

I do not know the exact date of the following letter to Mrs Burns:—

"Brow, Thursday.—My dearest Love, I delayed writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow: porridge and milk are the only things I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by Miss Jess Lewars, that you are all well. My very best and kindest compliments to her and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday. Your affectionate husband, R. B."

There is a very affecting letter to Gilbert, dated the 7th, in which the poet says, "I am dangerously ill, and not likely to get better.—God keep

my wife and children." On the 12th, he wrote the letter to Mr. George Thomson, above quoted, requesting £5 ; and, on the same day, he penned also the following—the last letter that he ever wrote—to his friend Mrs. Dunlop.

" Madam, I have written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that *bourne whence no traveller returns*. Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal ! The remembrance yet adds one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell ! ! !"

I give the following anecdote in the words of Mr. M'Diarmid :*— " Rousseau, we all know, when dying, wished to be carried into the open air, that he might obtain a parting look of the glorious orb of day. A night or two before Burns left Brow, he drank tea with Mrs. Craig, widow of the minister of Ruthwell. His altered appearance excited much silent sympathy ; and the evening being beautiful, and the sun shining brightly through the casement, Miss Craig (now Mrs. Henry Duncan), was afraid the light might be too much for him, and rose with the view of letting down the window blinds. Burns immediately guessed what she meant ; and, regarding the young lady with a look of great benignity, said, ' Thank you, my dear, for your kind attention ; but, oh, let him shine ; he will not shine long for me.' "

On the 18th, despairing of any benefit from the sea, our poet came back to Dumfries. Mr. Allan Cunningham, who saw him arrive " visibly changed in his looks, being with difficulty able to stand upright, and reach his own door," has given a striking picture, in one of his essays, of the state of popular feeling in the town during the short space which intervened between his return and his death.—" Dumfries was like a besieged place. It was known he was dying, and the anxiety, not of the rich and learned only, but of the mechanics and peasants, exceeded all belief. Wherever two or three people stood together, their talk was of Burns, and of him alone. They spoke of his history—of his person—of his works—of his family—of his fame—and of his untimely and approaching fate, with a warmth and an enthusiasm which will ever endear Dumfries to my remembrance. All that he said or was saying—the opinions of the physicians, (and Maxwell was a kind and a skilful one), were eagerly caught up and reported from street to street, and from house to house."

" His good humour," Cunningham adds, " was unruffled, and his wit never forsook him. He looked to one of his fellow volunteers with a smile, as he stood by the bed-side with his eyes wet, and said, ' John, don't let the awkward squad fire over me.' He repressed with a smile the hopes of his friends, and told them he had lived long enough. As his life drew near a close, the eager yet decorous solicitude of his fellow townsmen increased. It is the practice of the young men of Dumfries to meet in the streets during the hours of remission from labour, and by these means I had an opportunity of witnessing the general solicitude of all ranks and of all ages. His differences with them on some important points were forgotten and for-

* I take the opportunity of once more acknowledging my great obligations to this gentleman, who is, I understand, connected by his marriage with the family of the poet.

given; they thought only of his genius—of the delight his compositions had diffused—and they talked of him with the same awe as of some departing spirit, whose voice was to gladden them no more." *

"A tremour now pervaded his frame," says Dr. Currie, on the authority of the physician who attended him; "his tongue was parched; and his mind sunk into delirium, when not roused by conversation. On the second and third day the fever increased, and his strength diminished." On the fourth, July 21st 1796, Robert Burns died.

"I went to see him laid out for the grave," says Mr. Allan Cunningham; "several elder people were with me. He lay in a plain unadorned coffin, with a linen sheet drawn over his face; and on the bed, and around the body, herbs and flowers were thickly strewn, according to the usage of the country. He was wasted somewhat by long illness; but death had not increased the swarthy hue of his face, which was uncommonly dark and deeply marked—his broad and open brow was pale and serene, and around it his sable hair lay in masses, slightly touched with grey. The room where he lay was plain and neat, and the simplicity of the poet's humble dwelling pressed the presence of death more closely on the heart than if his bier had been embellished by vanity, and covered with the blazonry of high ancestry and rank. We stood and gazed on him in silence for the space of several minutes—we went, and others succeeded us—not a whisper was heard. This was several days after his death."

On the 25th of July, the remains of the poet were removed to the Trades Hall, where they lay in state until the next morning. The volunteers of Dumfries were determined to inter their illustrious comrade (as indeed he had anticipated) with military honours. The chief persons of the town and neighbourhood resolved to make part of the procession; and not a few travelled from great distances to witness the solemnity. The streets were lined by the Fencible Infantry of Angusshire, and the Cavalry of the Cinque Ports, then quarted at Dumfries, whose commander, Lord Hawksbury, (afterwards Earl of Liverpool), although he had always declined a personal introduction to the poet, † officiated as one of the chief mourners. "The multitude who accompanied Burns to the grave, went step by step," says Cunningham, "with the chief mourners. They might amount to ten or twelve thousand. Not a word was heard . . . . It was an impressive and mournful sight to see men of all ranks and persuasions and opinions mingling as brothers, and stepping side by side down the streets of Dumfries, with the remains of him who had sung of their loves and joys and domestic endearments, with a truth and a tenderness which none perhaps have since equalled. I could, indeed, have wished the military part of the procession away. The scarlet and gold—the banners displayed—the measured step, and the military array—with the sounds of martial instruments of music, had no share in increasing the solemnity of the burial scene; and had no connexion with the poet. I looked on it then, and I consider it now, as an idle ostentation, a piece of superfluous state which might have been spared, more especially as his neglected, and traduced, and insulted spirit had experienced no kindness in the body from those lofty people who are now proud of being numbered as his coevals and countrymen. . . . . I found myself at the brink of the poet's grave, into which he was about to descend for ever. There was a pause among the mourners, as if loath to

* In the London Magazine, 1824. Article, "Robert Burns and Lord Byron."
† So Mr. Syme has informed Mr. M'Diarmid.

part with his remains; and when he was at last lowered, and the first shovelful of earth sounded on his coffin lid, I looked up and saw tears on many cheeks where tears were not usual. The volunteers justified the fears of their comrade, by three ragged and straggling volleys. The earth was heaped up, the green sod laid over him, and the multitude stood gazing on the grave for some minutes' space, and then melted silently away. The day was a fine one, the sun was almost without a cloud, and not a drop of rain fell from dawn to twilight. I notice this, not from any concurrence in the common superstition, that 'happy is the corpse which the rain rains on,' but to confute the pious fraud of a religious Magazine, which made Heaven express its wrath, at the interment of a profane poet, in thunder, in lightning, and in rain."

During the funeral solemnity, Mrs. Burns was seized with the pains of labour, and gave birth to a posthumous son, who quickly followed his father to the grave. Mr. Cunningham describes the appearance of the family, when they at last emerged from their home of sorrow:—"A weeping widow and four helpless sons; they came into the streets in their mournings, and public sympathy was awakened afresh. I shall never forget the looks of his boys, and the compassion which they excited. The poet's life had not been without errors, and such errors, too, as a wife is slow in forgiving; but he was honoured then, and is honoured now, by the unalienable affection of his wife, and the world repays her prudence and her love by its regard and esteem."

Immediately after the poet's death, a subscription was opened for the benefit of his family; Mr. Miller of Dalswinton, Dr. Maxwell, Mr. Syme, Mr. Cunningham, and Mr. M'Murdo, becoming trustees for the application of the money. Many names from other parts of Scotland appeared in the lists, and not a few from England, especially London and Liverpool. Seven hundred pounds were in this way collected; an additional sum was forwarded from India; and the profits of Dr. Currie's Life and Edition of Burns were also considerable. The result has been, that the sons of the poet received an excellent education, and that Mrs. Burns has continued to reside, enjoying a decent independence, in the house where the poet died, situated in what is now, by the authority of the Magistrates of Dumfries, called Burns' Street.

"Of the (four surviving) sons of the poet," says their uncle Gilbert in 1820, "Robert, the eldest, is placed as a clerk in the Stamp Office, London, (Mr. Burns still remains in that establishment), Francis Wallace, the second, died in 1803; William Nicoll, the third, went to Madras in 1811; and James Glencairn, the youngest, to Bengal in 1812, both as cadets in the Honourable Company's service." These young gentlemen have all, it is believed, conducted themselves through life in a manner highly honourable to themselves, and to the name which they bear. One of them, (James), as soon as his circumstances permitted, settled a liberal annuity on his estimable mother, which she still survives to enjoy.

The great poet himself, whose name is enough to ennoble his children's children, was, to the eternal disgrace of his country, suffered to live and die in penury, and, as far as such a creature could be degraded by any external circumstances, in degradation. Who can open the page of Burns, and remember without a blush, that the author of such verses, the human being whose breast glowed with such feelings, was doomed to earn mere bread for his children by casting up the stock of publicans' cellars, and rid-

ing over moors and mosses in quest of smuggling stills? The subscription for his poems was, for the time, large and liberal, and perhaps absolves the gentry of Scotland as individuals; but that some strong movement of indignation did not spread over the whole kingdom, when it was known that Robert Burns, after being caressed and flattered by the noblest and most learned of his countrymen, was about to be established as a common gauger among the wilds of Nithsdale—and that, after he was so established, no interference from a higher quarter arrested that unworthy career:—these are circumstances which must continue to bear heavily on the memory of that generation of Scotsmen, and especially of those who then administered the public patronage of Scotland.

In defence, or at least in palliation, of this national crime, two false arguments, the one resting on facts grossly exaggerated, the other having no foundation whatever either on knowledge or on wisdom, have been rashly set up, and arrogantly as well as ignorantly maintained. To the one, namely, that public patronage would have been wrongfully bestowed on the Poet, because the Exciseman was a political partizan, it is hoped the details embodied in this narrative have supplied a sufficient answer: had the matter been as bad as the boldest critics have ever ventured to insinuate, Sir Walter Scott's answer would still have remained—"this partizan was Burns." The other argument is a still more heartless, as well as absurd one; to wit, that from the moral character and habits of the man, no patronage, however liberal, could have influenced and controlled his conduct, so as to work lasting and effective improvement, and lengthen his life by raising it more nearly to the elevation of his genius. This is indeed a candid and a generous method of judging! Are imprudence and intemperance, then, found to increase usually in proportion as the worldly circumstances of men are easy? Is not the very opposite of this doctrine acknowledged by almost all that have ever tried the reverses of Fortune's wheel themselves—by all that have contemplated, from an elevation not too high for sympathy, the usual course of manners, when their fellow creatures either encounter or live in constant apprehension of

> "The thousand ills that rise where money fails,
> Debts, threats, and duns, bills, bailiffs, writs, and jails?"

To such mean miseries the latter years of Burns's life were exposed, not less than his early youth, and after what natural buoyancy of animal spirits he ever possessed, had sunk under the influence of time, which, surely bringing experience, fails seldom to bring care also and sorrow, to spirits more mercurial than his; and in what bitterness of heart he submitted to his fate, let his own burning words once more tell us. "Take," says he, writing to one who never ceased to be his friend—"take these two guineas, and place them over against that ****** account of yours, which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O, the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Poverty! thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell! Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or writhes in bitterness of soul, under the contumely of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see, in suffering silence, his remark neglected, and

his person despised, while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee; the children of folly and vice, though, in common with thee, the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. The man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education, is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies, as usual, bring him to want; and when his necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. *His* early follies and extravagance, are spirit and fire; *his* consequent wants, are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a ******* and a lord!—Nay, worst of all, alas for helpless woman! the needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of casual prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot wheels of the coroneted RIP, hurrying on to the guilty assignation; she, who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade.—Well: divines may say of it what they please, but execretion is to the mind, what phlebotomy is to the body; the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations." *

In such evacuations of indignant spleen the proud heart of many an unfortunate genius, besides this, has found or sought relief: and to other more dangerous indulgences, the affliction of such sensitive spirits had often, ere his time, condescended. The list is a long and a painful one; and it includes some names that can claim but a scanty share in the apology of Burns. Addison himself, the elegant, the philosophical, the religious Addison, must be numbered with these offenders:—Jonson, Cotton, Prior, Parnell, Otway, Savage, all sinned in the same sort, and the transgressions of them all have been leniently dealt with, in comparison with those of one whose genius was probably greater than any of theirs; his appetites more fervid, his temptations more abundant, his repentance more severe. The beautiful genius of Collins sunk under similar contaminations; and those who have from dullness of head, or sourness of heart, joined in the too general clamour against Burns, may learn a lesson of candour, of mercy, and of justice, from the language in which one of the best of men, and loftiest of moralists, has commented on frailties that hurried a kindred spirit to a like untimely grave.

"In a long continuance of poverty, and long habits of dissipation," says Johnson, "it cannot be expected that any character should be exactly uniform. That this man, wise and virtuous as he was, passed always unentangled through the snares of life, it would be prejudice and temerity to affirm: but it may be said that he at least preserved the source of action unpolluted, that his principles were never shaken, that his distinctions of right and wrong were never confounded, and that his faults had nothing of malignity or design, but proceeded from some unexpected pressure or casual temptation. Such was the fate of Collins, with whom I once delighted to converse, and whom I yet remember with tenderness."

* Letter to Mr. Peter Hill, bookseller, Edinburgh. General Correspondence, p. 328.

Burns was an honest man: after all his struggles, he owed no man a shilling when he died. His heart was always warm and his hand open. "His charities," says Mr. Gray, "were great beyond his means;" and I have to thank Mr. Allan Cunningham for the following anecdote, for which I am sure every reader will thank him too. Mr. Maxwell of Teraughty, an old, austere, sarcastic gentleman, who cared nothing about poetry, used to say when the Excise-books of the district were produced at the meetings of the Justices,—"Bring me Burns's journal: it always does me good to see it, for it shows that an honest officer may carry a kind heart about with him."

Of his religious principles, we are bound to judge by what he has told himself in his more serious moments. He sometimes doubted with the sorrow, what in the main, and above all, in the end, he believed with the fervour of a poet. "It occasionally haunts me," says he in one of his letters,—"the dark suspicion, that immortality may be only too good news to be true;" and here, as on many points besides, how much did his method of thinking, (I fear I must add of acting), resemble that of a noble poet more recently lost to us. "I am no bigot to infidelity," said Lord Byron, "and did not expect that because I doubted the immortality of man, I should be charged with denying the existence of a God. It was the comparative insignificance of ourselves and our world, when placed in comparison with the mighty whole, of which it is an atom, that first led me to imagine that our pretensions to immortality might be overrated." I dare not pretend to quote the sequel from memory, but the effect was, that Byron, like Burns, complained of "the early discipline of Scotch Calvinism," and the natural gloom of a melancholy heart, as having between them engendered "a hypochondriacal *disease*," which occasionally visited and depressed him through life. In the opposite scale, we are, in justice to Burns, to place many pages which breathe the ardour, nay the exultation of faith, and the humble sincerity of Christian hope; and, as the poet himself has warned us, it well befits us

"At the balance to be mute."

Let us avoid, in the name of Religion herself, the fatal error of those who would rashly swell the catalogue of the enemies of religion. "A sally of levity," says once more Dr. Johnson, "an indecent jest, an unreasonable objection, are sufficient, in the opinion of some men, to efface a name from the lists of Christianity, to exclude a soul from everlasting life. Such men are so watchful to censure, that they have seldom much care to look for favourable interpretations of ambiguities, or to know how soon any step of inadvertency has been expiated by sorrow and retractation, but let fly their fulminations without mercy or prudence against slight offences or casual temerities, against crimes never committed, or immediately repented. The zealot should recollect, that he is labouring, by this frequency of excommunication, against his own cause, and voluntarily adding strength to the enemies of truth. It must always be the condition of a great part of mankind, to reject and embrace tenets upon the authority of those whom they think wiser than themselves, and therefore the addition of every name to infidelity, in some degree invalidates that argument upon which the religion of multitudes is necessarily founded." * In conclusion, let me adopt

* Life of Sir Thomas Browne.

the beautiful sentiment of that illustrious moral poet of our own time, whose generous defence of Burns will be remembered while the language lasts ;—

> " Let no mean hope your souls enslave—
> Be independent, generous, brave ;
> Your" Poet " such example gave,
> And such revere,
> But be admonished by his grave,
> And think and fear." *

It is possible, perhaps for some it may be easy, to imagine a character of a much higher cast than that of Burns, developed, too, under circumstances in many respects not unlike those of his history—the character of a man of lowly birth, and powerful genius, elevated by that philosophy which is alone pure and divine, far above all those annoyances of terrestrial spleen and passion, which mixed from the beginning with the workings of his inspiration, and in the end were able to eat deep into the great heart which they had long tormented. Such a being would have received, no question, a species of devout reverence, I mean when the grave had closed on him, to which the warmest admirers of our poet can advance no pretensions for their unfortunate favourite ; but could such a being have delighted his species—could he even have instructed them like Burns ? Ought we not to be thankful for every new variety of form and circumstance, in and under which the ennobling energies of true and lofty genius are found addressing themselves to the common brethren of the race ? Would we have none but Miltons and Cowpers in poetry—but Brownes and Southeys in prose ? Alas ! if it were so, to how large a portion of the species would all the gifts of all the muses remain for ever a fountain shut up and a book sealed ! Were the doctrine of intellectual excommunication to be thus expounded and enforced, how small the library that would remain to kindle the fancy, to draw out and refine the feelings, to enlighten the head by expanding the heart of man ! From Aristophanes to Byron, how broad the sweep, how woeful the desolation !

In the absence of that vehement sympathy with humanity as it is, its sorrows and its joys as they are, we might have had a great man, perhaps a great poet, but we could have had no Burns. It is very noble to despise the accidents of fortune ; but what moral homily concerning these, could have equalled that which Burns's poetry, considered alongside of Burns's history, and the history of his fame, presents ! It is very noble to be above the allurements of pleasure ; but who preaches so effectually against them, as he who sets forth in immortal verse his own intense sympathy with those that yield, and in verse and in prose, in action and in passion, in life and in death, the dangers and the miseries of yielding ?

It requires a graver audacity of hypocrisy than falls to the share of most men, to declaim against Burns's sensibility to the tangible cares and toils of his earthly condition ; there are more who venture on broad denunciations of his sympathy with the joys of sense and passion. To these, the great moral poet already quoted speaks in the following noble passage—and must he speak in vain ? " Permit me," says he, " to remind you, that it is the privilege of poetic genius to catch, under certain restrictions of which perhaps at the time of its being exerted it is but dimly conscious, a

* Wordsworth's address to the sons of Burns, on visiting his grave in 1803.

spirit of pleasure wherever it can be found,—in the walks of nature, and in the business of men.—The poet, trusting to primary instincts, luxuriates among the felicities of love and wine, and is enraptured while he describes the fairer aspects of war; nor does he shrink from the company of the passion of love though immoderate—from convivial pleasure though intemperate—nor from the presence of war though savage, and recognised as the hand-maid of desolation. Frequently and admirably has Burns given way to these impulses of nature; both with reference to himself, and in describing the condition of others. Who, but some impenetrable dunce or narrow-minded puritant in works of art, ever read without delight the picture which he has drawn of the convivial exaltation of the rustic adventurer, Tam o' Shanter? The poet fears not to tell the reader in the outset, that his hero was a desperate and sottish drunkard, whose excesses were frequent as his opportunities. This reprobate sits down to his cups, while the storm is roaring, and heaven and earth are in confusion;—the night is driven on by song and tumultuous noise—laughter and jest thicken as the beverage improves upon the palate—conjugal fidelity archly bends to the service of general benevolence—selfishness is not absent, but wearing the mask of social cordiality—and, while these various elements of humanity are blended into one proud and happy composition of elated spirits, the anger of the tempest without doors only heightens and sets off the enjoyment within.—I pity him who cannot perceive that, in all this, though there was no moral purpose, there is a moral effect.

> "Kings may be blest, but Tam was glorious,
> O'er a' the *ills* o' life victorious."

"What a lesson do these words convey of charitable indulgence for the vicious habits of the principal actor in this scene, and of those who resemble him!—Men who to the rigidly virtuous are objects almost of loathing, and whom therefore they cannot serve! The poet, penetrating the unsightly and disgusting surfaces of things, has unveiled with exquisite skill the finer ties of imagination and feeling, that often bind these beings to practices productive of much unhappiness to themselves, and to those whom it is their duty to cherish;—and, as far as he puts the reader into possession of this intelligent sympathy, he qualifies him for exercising a salutary influence over the minds of those who are thus deplorably deceived." *

That some men in every age will comfort themselves in the practice of certain vices, by reference to particular passages both in the history and in the poetry of Burns, there is all reason to fear; but surely the general influence of both is calculated, and has been found, to produce far different effects. The universal popularity which his writings have all along enjoyed among one of the most virtuous of nations, is of itself, as it would seem, a decisive circumstance. Search Scotland over, from the Pentland to the Solway, and there is not a cottage-hut so poor and wretched as to be without its Bible; and hardly one that, on the same shelf, and next to it, does not possess a Burns. Have the people degenerated since their adoption of this new manual? Has their attachment to the Book of Books declined? Are their hearts less firmly bound, than were their fathers', to the old faith and the old virtues? I believe, he that knows the most of the country will

* Wordsworth's Letter to Gray, p. 24.

be the readiest to answer all these questions, as every lover of genius and virtue would desire to hear them answered.

On one point there can be no controversy; the poetry of Burns has had most powerful influence in reviving and strengthening the national feelings of his countrymen. Amidst penury and labour, his youth fed on the old minstrelsy and traditional glories of his nation, and his genius divined, that what he felt so deeply must belong to a spirit that might lie smothered, around him, but could not be extinguished. The political circumstances of Scotland were, and had been, such as to starve the flame of patriotism; the popular literature had striven, and not in vain, to make itself English; and, above all, a new and a cold system of speculative philosophy had begun to spread widely among us. A peasant appeared, and set himself to check the creeping pestilence of this indifference. Whatever genius has since then been devoted to the illustration of the national manners, and sustaining thereby of the national feelings of the people, there can be no doubt that Burns will ever be remembered as the founder, and, alas! in his own person as the martyr, of this reformation.

That what is now-a-days called, by solitary eminence, the *wealth* of the nation, had been on the increase ever since our incorporation with a greater and wealthier state—nay, that the laws had been improving, and, above all, the administration of the laws, it would be mere bigotry to dispute. It may also be conceded easily, that the national mind had been rapidly clearing itself of many injurious prejudices—that the people, as a people, had been gradually and surely advancing in knowledge and wisdom, as well as in wealth and security. But all this good had not been accomplished without rude work. If the improvement were valuable, it had been purchased dearly. "The spring fire," Allan Cunningham says beautifully somewhere, "which destroys the furze, makes an end also of the nests of a thousand song-birds; and he who goes a-trouting with lime leaves little of life in the stream." We were getting fast ashamed of many precious and beautiful things, only for that they were old and our own.

It has already been remarked, how even Smollett, who began with a national tragedy, and one of the noblest of national lyrics, never dared to make use of the dialect of his own country; and how Moore, another most enthusiastic Scotsman, followed in this respect, as in others, the example of Smollett, and over and over again counselled Burns to do the like. But a still more striking sign of the times is to be found in the style adopted by both of these novelists, especially the great master of the art, in their representations of the manners and characters of their own countrymen. In Humphry Clinker, the last and best of Smollett's tales, there are some traits of a better kind—but, taking his works as a whole, the impression it conveys is certainly a painful, a disgusting one. The Scotsmen of these authors, are the Jockeys and Archies of farce—

> Time out of mind the Southrons' mirthmakers—

the best of them grotesque combinations of simplicity and hypocrisy, pride and meanness. When such men, high-spirited Scottish gentlemen, possessed of learning and talents, and, one of them at least, of splendid genius, felt, or fancied, the necessity of making such submissions to the prejudices of the dominant nation, and did so without exciting a murmur among their own countrymen, we may form some notion of the boldness of Burns's experiment; and on contrasting the state of things then with what is before us

now, it will cost no effort to appreciate the nature and consequences of the victory in which our poet led the way, by achievements never in their kind to be surpassed. "Burns," says Mr. Campbell, "has given the elixir vitæ to his dialect;"—he gave it to more than his dialect. "He was," says a writer, in whose language a brother poet will be recognised—"he was in many respects born at a happy time; happy for a man of genius like him, but fatal and hopeless to the more common mind. A whole world of life lay before Burns, whose inmost recesses, and darkest nooks, and sunniest eminences, he had familiarly trodden from his childhood. All that world he felt could be made his own. No conqueror had overrun its fertile provinces, and it was for him to be crowned supreme over all the

'Lyric singers of that high-soul'd land.'

The crown that he has won can never be removed from his head. Much is yet left for other poets, even among that life where his spirit delighted to work; but he has built monuments on all the high places, and they who follow can only hope to leave behind them some far humbler memorials." *

Dr. Currie says, that "if *fiction* be the soul of poetry, as some assert, Burns can have small pretensions to the name of poet." The success of Burns, the influence of his verse, would alone be enough to overturn all the systems of a thousand definers; but the Doctor has obviously taken *fiction* in far too limited a sense. There are indeed but few of Burns's pieces in which he is found creating beings and circumstances, both alike alien from his own person and experience, and then by the power of imagination, divining and expressing what forms life and passion would assume with, and under these.—But there are some; there is quite enough to satisfy every reader of *Hallowe'en*, the *Jolly Beggars*, and *Tam o' Shanter*, (to say nothing of various particular songs, such as *Bruce's Address*, *Macpherson's Lament*, &c.), that Burns, if he pleased, might have been as largely and as successfully an inventor in this way, as he is in another walk, perhaps not so inferior to this as many people may have accustomed themselves to believe; in the art, namely, of recombining and new-combining, varying, embellishing, and fixing and transmitting the elements of a most picturesque experience, and most vivid feelings.

Lord Byron, in his letter on Pope, treats with high and just contempt the laborious trifling which has been expended on distinguishing by air-drawn lines and technical slang-words, the elements and materials of poetical exertion; and, among other things, expresses his scorn of the attempts that have been made to class Burns among minor poets, merely because he has put forth few large pieces, and still fewer of what is called the purely imaginative character. Fight who will about words and forms, "Burns's rank," says he, "is in the first class of his art;" and, I believe, the world at large are now-a-days well prepared to prefer a line from such a pen as Byron's on any such subject as this, to the most luculent dissertation that ever perplexed the brains of writer and of reader. *Sentio, ergo sum*, says the metaphysician; the critic may safely parody the saying, and assert that that is poetry of the highest order, which exerts influence of the most powerful order on the hearts and minds of mankind.

Burns has been appreciated duly, and he has had the fortune to be praised eloquently, by almost every poet who has come after him. To accu-

* Blackwood's Magazine, February 1817.

mulate all that has been said of him, even by men like himself, of the first order, would fill a volume—and a noble monument, no question, that volume would be—the noblest, except what he has left us in his own immortal verses, which—were some dross removed, and the rest arranged in a chronological order—would I believe form, to the intelligent, a more perfect and vivid history of his life than will ever be composed out of all the materials in the world besides.

" The impression of his genius," says Campbell, " is deep and universal; and viewing him merely as a poet, there is scarcely another regret connected with his name, than that his productions, with all their merit, fall short of the talents which he possessed. That he never attempted any great work of fiction, may be partly traced to the cast of his genius, and partly to his circumstances, and defective education. His poetical temperament was that of fitful transports, rather than steady inspiration. Whatever he might have written, was likely to have been fraught with passion. There is always enough of *interest* in life to cherish the feelings of genius; but it requires knowledge to enlarge and enrich the imagination. Of that knowledge which unrolls the diversities of human manners, adventures, and characters, to a poet's study, he could have no great share; although he stamped the little treasure which he possessed in the mintage of sovereign genius." *

" Notwithstanding," says Sir Walter Scott, " the spirit of many of his lyrics, and the exquisite sweetness and simplicity of others, we cannot but deeply regret that so much of his time and talents was frittered away in compiling and composing for musical collections. There is sufficient evidence, that even the genius of Burns could not support him in the monotonous task of writing love verses, on heaving bosoms and sparkling eyes, and twisting them into such rhythmical forms as might suit the capricious evolutions of Scotch reels and strathspeys. Besides, this constant waste of his power and fancy in small and insignificant compositions, must necessarily have had no little effect in deterring him from undertaking any grave or important task. Let no one suppose that we undervalue the songs of Burns. When his soul was intent on suiting a favourite air to words humorous or tender, as the subject demanded, no poet of our tongue ever displayed higher skill in marrying melody to immortal verse. But the writing of a series of songs for large musical collections, degenerated into a slavish labour which no talents could support, led to negligence, and, above all, diverted the poet from his grand plan of dramatic composition. To produce a work of this kind, neither, perhaps, a regular tragedy nor comedy, but something partaking of the nature of both, seems to have been long the cherished wish of Burns. He had even fixed on the subject, which was an adventure in low life, said to have happened to Robert Bruce, while wandering in danger and disguise, after being defeated by the English. The Scottish dialect would have rendered such a piece totally unfit for the stage; but those who recollect the masculine and lofty tone of martial spirit which glows in the poem of Bannockburn, will sigh to think what the character of the gallant Bruce might have proved under the hand of Burns. It would undoubtedly have wanted that tinge of chivalrous feeling which the manners of the age, no less than the disposition of the monarch, demanded; but this deficiency would have been more than supplied by a bard who could have drawn from his own perceptions, the unbending energy of a

* Specimens, vol. vii. 241.

hero sustaining the desertion of friends, the persecution of enemies, and the utmost malice of disastrous fortune. The scene, too, being partly laid in humble life, admitted that display of broad humour and exquisite pathos, with which he could, interchangeably and at pleasure, adorn his cottage views. Nor was the assemblage of familiar sentiments incompatible in Burns, with those of the most exalted dignity. In the inimitable tale of *Tam o' Shanter*, he has left us sufficient evidence of his abilities to combine the ludicrous with the awful, and even the horrible. No poet, with the exception of Shakspeare, ever possessed the power of exciting the most varied and discordant emotions with such rapid transitions. His humourous description of death in the poem on *Dr. Hornbook* borders on the terrific, and the witches' dance in the kirk of Alloa is at once ludicrous and horrible. Deeply must we then regret those avocations which diverted a fancy so varied and so vigorous, joined with language and expression suited to all its changes, from leaving a more substantial monument to his own fame, and to the honour of his country."

The cantata of the *Jolly Beggars*, which was not printed at all until some time after the poet's death, and has not been included in the editions of his works until within these few years, cannot be considered as it deserves, without strongly heightening our regret that Burns never lived to execute his meditated drama. That extraordinary sketch, coupled with his later lyrics in a higher vein, is enough to show that in him we had a master capable of placing the musical drama on a level with the loftiest of our classical forms. *Beggar's Bush*, and *Beggar's Opera*, sink into tameness in the comparison; and indeed, without profanity to the name of Shakspeare, it may be said, that out of such materials, even his genius could hardly have constructed a piece in which imagination could have more splendidly predominated over the outward shows of things—in which the sympathy-awakening power of poetry could have been displayed more triumphantly under circumstances of the greatest difficulty.—That remarkable performance, by the way, was an early production of the Mauchline period. I know nothing but the *Tam o' Shanter* that is calculated to convey so high an impression of what Burns might have done.

As to Burns's want of education and knowledge, Mr. Campbell may not have considered, but he must admit, that whatever Burns's opportunities had been at the time when he produced his first poems, such a man as he was not likely to be a hard reader, (which he certainly was), and a constant observer of men and manners, in a much wider circle of society than almost any other great poet has ever moved in, from three-and-twenty to eight-and-thirty, without having thoroughly removed any pretext for auguring unfavourably on that score, of what he might have been expected to produce in the more elaborate departments of his art, had his life been spared to the usual limits of humanity. In another way, however, I cannot help suspecting that Burns's enlarged knowledge, both of men and books, produced an unfavourable effect, rather than otherwise, on the exertions, such as they were, of his later years. His generous spirit was open to the impression of every kind of excellence; his lively imagination, bending its own vigour to whatever it touched, made him admire even what other people try to read in vain; and after travelling, as he did, over the general surface of our literature, he appears to have been somewhat startled at the consideration of what he himself had, in comparative ignorance, adventured, and to have been more intimidated than encouraged by the retrospect.

In most of the new departments in which he made some trial of his strength, (such, for example, as the moral epistle in Pope's vein, the *heroic* satire, &c.), he appears to have soon lost heart, and paused. There is indeed one magnificent exception in *Tam o' Shanter*—a piece which no one can understand without believing, that had Burns pursued that walk, and poured out his stores of traditionary lore, embellished with his extraordinary powers of description of all kinds, we might have had from his hand a series of national tales, uniting the quaint simplicity, sly humour, and irresistible pathos of another Chaucer, with the strong and graceful versification, and masculine wit and sense of another Dryden.

This was a sort of feeling that must have in time subsided.—But let us not waste words in regretting what might have been, where so much is.—Burns, short and painful as were his years, has left behind him a volume in which there is inspiration for every fancy, and music for every mood; which lives, and will live in strength and vigour—"to soothe," as a generous lover of genius has said—"the sorrows of how many a lover, to inflame the patriotism of how many a soldier, to fan the fires of how many a genius, to disperse the gloom of solitude, appease the agonies of pain, encourage virtue, and show vice its ugliness;" *—a volume, in which, centuries hence, as now, wherever a Scotsman may wander, he will find the dearest consolation of his exile.—Already has

> ——————— "Glory without end
> Scattered the clouds away; and on that name attend
> The tears and praises of all time." †

The mortal remains of the poet rest in Dumfries churchyard. For nineteen years they were covered by the plain and humble tombstone placed over them by his widow, bearing the inscription simply of his name. But a splendid mausoleum having been erected by public subscription on the most elevated site which the churchyard presented, the remains were solemnly transferred thither on the 8th June 1815; the original tombstone having been sunk under the bottom of the mausoleum. This shrine of the poet is annually visited by many pilgrims. The inscription it bears is given below. Another splendid monumental edifice has also been erected to his memory on a commanding situation at the foot of the Carrick hills in Ayrshire, in the immediate vicinity of the old cottage where the poet was born; and such is the unceasing, nay daily increasing veneration of his admiring countrymen, that a third one, of singular beauty of design, is now in progress, upon a striking projection of that most picturesque eminence—the Calton Hill of Edinburgh.—The cut annexed to p. cxxxvi. exhibits a view, necessarily but an imperfect one, of the monument last mentioned.

* See the Censura Literaria of Sir Egerton Brydges, vol. ii. p. 55.
† Lord Byron's Child Harold, Canto iv. 36.

INSCRIPTION UPON THE POET'S MONUMENT IN DUMFRIES CHURCHYARD.

IN AETERNUM HONOREM

ROBERTI BURNS

POETARUM CALEDONIAE SUI AEVI LONGE PRINCIPIS

CUJUS CARMINA EXIMIA PATRIO SERMONE SCRIPTA

ANIMI MAGIS ARDENTIS VIQUE INGENII

QUAM ARTE VEL CULTU CONSPICUA

FACETIIS JUCUNDITATE LEPORE AFFLUENTIA

OMNIBUS LITTERARUM CULTORIBUS SATIS NOTA

CIVES SUI NECNON PLERIQUE OMNES

MUSARUM AMANTISSIMI MEMORIAMQUE VIRI

ARTE POETICA TAM PRAECLARI FOVENTES

HOC MAUSOLEUM

SUPER RELIQUIAS POETAE MORTALES

EXTRUENDUM CURAVERE

PRIMUM HUJUS AEDIFICII LAPIDEM

GULIELMUS MILLER ARMIGER

REIPUBLICAE ARCHITECTONICAE APUD SCOTOS

IN REGIONE AUSTRALI CURIO MAXIMUS PROVINCIALIS

GEORGIO TERTIO REGNANTE

GEORGIO WALLIARUM PRINCIPE

SUMMAM IMPERII PRO PATRE TENENTE

IOSEPHO GASS ARMIGERO DUMFRISIAE PRAEFECTO

THOMA F. HUNT LONDINENSI ARCHITECTO

POSUIT

NONIS JUNIIS ANNO LUCIS VMDCCCXV

SALUTIS HUMANAE MDCCCXV.

The many poetical effusions the Poet's death gave rise to, presents a wide field for selection.—The elegiac verses by Mr. Roscoe of Liverpool have been preferred, as the most fitting sequel to his eventful life.

ON

THE DEATH OF BURNS.

REAR high thy bleak majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread,
And, SCOTIA, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red;
But, ah! what poet now shall tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he, the sweetest bard, is dead,
That ever breath'd the soothing strain!

As green thy towering pines may grow,
As clear thy streams may speed along,
As bright thy summer suns may glow,
As gaily charm thy feathery throng;
But now, unheeded is the song,
And dull and lifeless all around,
For his wild harp lies all unstrung,
And cold the hand that waked its sound.

What though thy vigorous offspring rise,
In arts, in arms, thy sons excel;
Tho' beauty in thy daughters' eyes,
And health in every feature dwell?
Yet who shall now their praises tell,
In strains impassion'd, fond, and free,
Since he no more the song shall swell
To love, and liberty, and thee?

With step-dame eye and frown severe
His hapless youth why didst thou view?
For all thy joys to him were dear,
And all his vows to thee were due;
Nor greater bliss his bosom knew,
In opening youth's delightful prime,
Than when thy favouring ear he drew
To listen to his chaunted rhyme.

Thy lonely wastes and frowning skies
To him were all with rapture fraught;
He heard with joy the tempest rise
That waked him to sublimer thought;
And oft thy winding dells he sought,
Where wild-flowers pour'd their rathe perfume,
And with sincere devotion brought
To thee the summer's earliest bloom.

But ah! no fond maternal smile
His unprotected youth enjoy'd,
His limbs inur'd to early toil,
His days with early hardships tried;
And more to mark the gloomy void,
And bid him feel his misery,
Before his infant eyes would glide
Day-dreams of immortality.

Yet, not by cold neglect depress'd,
With sinewy arm he turn'd the soil,
Sunk with the evening sun to rest,
And met at morn his earliest smile.
Waked by his rustic pipe, meanwhile
The powers of fancy came along,
And sooth'd his lengthened hours of toil,
With native wit and sprightly song.

—Ah! days of bliss, too swiftly fled,
When vigorous health from labour springs,
And bland contentment smooths the bed,
And sleep his ready opiate brings;
And hovering round on airy wings
Float the light forms of young desire,
That of unutterable things
The soft and shadowy hope inspire.

Now spells of mightier power prepare,
Bid brighter phantoms round him dance;
Let Flattery spread her viewless snare,
And Fame attract his vagrant glance;
Let sprightly Pleasure too advance,
Unveil'd her eyes, unclasp'd her zone,
Till, lost in love's delirious trance,
He scorns the joys his youth has known.

Let Friendship pour her brightest blaze,
Expanding all the bloom of soul;
And Mirth concentre all her rays,
And point them from the sparkling bowl;
And let the careless moments roll
In social pleasure unconfined,
And confidence that spurns control
Unlock the inmost springs of mind:

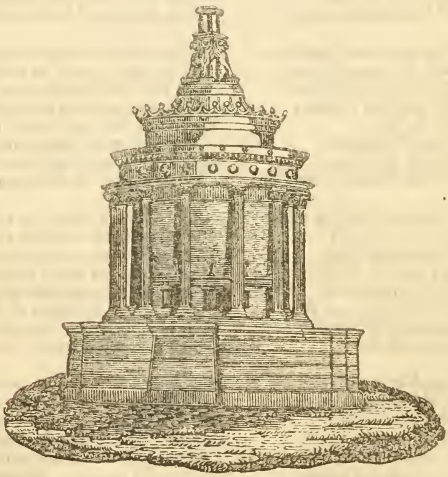
And lead his steps those bowers among,
Where elegance with splendour vies,
Or Science bids her favour'd throng
To more refined sensations rise:
Beyond the peasant's humbler joys,
And freed from each laborious strife,
There let him learn the bliss to prize
That waits the sons of polish'd life.

Then whilst his throbbing veins beat high
With every impulse of delight,
Dash from his lips the cup of joy,
And shroud the scene in shades of night;
And let Despair, with wizard light,
Disclose the yawning gulf below,
And pour incessant on his sight
Her spectred ills and shapes of woe:

And show beneath a cheerless shed,
With sorrowing heart and streaming eyes,
In silent grief where droops her head,
The partner of his early joys;
And let his infants' tender cries
His fond parental succour claim,
And bid him hear in agonies
A husband's and a father's name.

'Tis done, the powerful charm succeeds;
His high reluctant spirit bends;
In bitterness of soul he bleeds,
Nor longer with his fate contends.
An idiot laugh the welkin rends
As genius thus degraded lies;
Till pitying Heaven the veil extends
That shrouds the Poet's ardent eyes.

—Rear high thy bleak majestic hills,
Thy shelter'd valleys proudly spread,
And, SCOTIA, pour thy thousand rills,
And wave thy heaths with blossoms red;
But never more shall poet tread
Thy airy heights, thy woodland reign,
Since he, the sweetest bard, is dead,
That ever breathed the soothing strain.



CHARACTER

OF

BURNS AND HIS WRITINGS,

BY

MRS. RIDDELL OF GLENRIDDELL.*

The attention of the public seems to be much occupied at present with the loss it has recently sustained in the death of the Caledonian poet, Robert Burns; a loss calculated to be severely felt throughout the literary world, as well as lamented in the narrower sphere of private friendship. It was not therefore probable that such an event should be long unattended with the accustomed profusion of posthumous anecdotes and memoirs which are usually circulated immediately after the death of every rare and celebrated personage: I had however conceived no intention of appropriating to myself the privilege of criticising Burns's writings and character, or of anticipating on the province of a biographer.

Conscious indeed of my own inability to do justice to such a subject, I should have continued wholly silent, had misrepresentation and calumny been less industrious; but a regard to truth, no less than affection for the memory of a friend, must now justify my offering to the public a few at least of those observations which an intimate acquaintance with Burns, and the frequent opportunities I have had of observing equally his happy qualities and his failings for several years past, have enabled me to communicate.

It will actually be an injustice done to Burns's character, not only by future generations and foreign countries, but even by his native Scotland, and perhaps a number of his contemporaries, that he is generally talked of, and considered, with reference to his poetical talents *only:* for the fact is, even allowing his great and original genius its due tribute of admiration, that poetry (I appeal to all who have had the advantage of being personally acquainted with him) was actually not his *forte.* Many others, perhaps, may have ascended to prouder heights in the region of Parnassus, but none certainly ever outshone Burns in the charms—the sorcery, I

* Mrs. Riddell knew the poet well; she had every opportunity for observation of what he said and did, as well as of what was said of him and done towards him. Her beautifully written *Eloge,*—friendly yet candid,—was well received and generally circulated at the time. It has been inserted by Dr. Currie in his several editions, as interesting from its elegance, and authoritative from the writer's accurate information; we have therefore most readily given it a place here.

would almost call it, of fascinating conversation, the spontaneous eloquence of social argument, or the unstudied poignancy of brilliant repartee; nor was any man, I believe, ever gifted with a larger portion of the '*vivida vis animi*.' His personal endowments were perfectly correspondent to the qualifications of his mind: his form was manly; his action, energy itself; devoid in great measure perhaps of those graces, of that polish, acquired only in the refinement of societies where in early life he could have no opportunities of mixing; but where, such was the irresistible power of attraction that encircled him, though his appearance and manners were always peculiar, he never failed to delight and to excel. His figure seemed to bear testimony to his earlier destination and employments. It seemed rather moulded by nature for the rough exercises of Agriculture, than the gentler cultivation of the Belles Lettres. His features were stamped with the hardy character of independence, and the firmness of conscious, though not arrogant, pre-eminence; the animated expressions of countenance were almost peculiar to himself; the rapid lightnings of his eye were always the harbingers of some flash of genius, whether they darted the fiery glances of insulted and indignant superiority, or beamed with the impassioned sentiment of fervent and impetuous affections. His voice alone could improve upon the magic of his eye: sonorous, replete with the finest modulations, it alternately captivated the ear with the melody of poetic numbers, the perspicuity of nervous reasoning, or the ardent sallies of enthusiastic patriotism. The keenness of satire was, I am almost at a loss whether to say, his forte or his foible; for though nature had endowed him with a portion of the most pointed excellence in that dangerous talent, he suffered it too often to be the vehicle of personal, and sometimes unfounded, animosities. It was not always that sportiveness of humour, that "unwary pleasantry," which Sterne has depicted with touches so conciliatory; but the darts of ridicule were frequently directed as the caprice of the instant suggested, or as the altercations of parties and of persons happened to kindle the restlessness of his spirit into interest or aversion. This, however, was not invariably the case; his wit, (which is no unusual matter indeed), had always the start of his judgment, and would lead him into the indulgence of raillery uniformly acute, but often unaccompanied with the least desire to wound. The suppression of an arch and full-pointed bon mot, from a dread of offending its object, the sage of Zurich very properly classes as a virtue *only to be sought for in the Calendar of Saints;* if so, Burns must not be too severely dealt with for being rather deficient in it. He paid for his mischievous wit as dearly as any one could do. "'Twas no extravagant arithmetic," to say of him, as was said of Yorick, that "for every ten jokes he got a hundred enemies;" but much allowance will be made by a candid mind for the splenetic warmth of a spirit whom "distress had spited with the world," and which, unbounded in its intellectual sallies and pursuits, continually experienced the curbs imposed by the waywardness of his fortune. The vivacity of his wishes and temper was indeed checked by almost habitual disappointments, which sat heavy on a heart that acknowledged the ruling passion of independence, without having ever been placed beyond the grasp of penury. His soul was never languid or inactive, and his genius was extinguished only with the last spark of retreating life. His passions rendered him, according as they disclosed themselves in affection or antipathy, an object of enthusiastic attachment, or of decided enmity: for *he* possessed none of that negative insipidity of cha-

racter, whose love might be regarded with indifference, or whose resentment could be considered with contempt. In this, it should seem, the temper of his associates took the tincture from his own ; for *he* acknowledged in the universe but two classes of objects, those of adoration the most fervent, or of aversion the most uncontrolable ; and it has been frequently a reproach to him, that, unsusceptible of indifference, often hating, where he ought only to have despised, he alternately opened his heart and poured forth the treasures of his understanding to such as were incapable of appreciating the homage ; and elevated to the privileges of an adversary, some who were unqualified in all respects for the honour of a contest so distinguished.

It is said that the celebrated Dr. Johnson professed to " love a good hater"—a temperament that would have singularly adapted him to cherish a prepossession in favour of our bard, who perhaps fell but little short even of the surly Doctor in this qualification, as long as the disposition to ill-will continued ; but the warmth of his passions was fortunately corrected by their versatility. He was seldom, indeed never, implacable in his resentments, and sometimes, it has been alleged, not inviolably faithful in his engagements of friendship. Much indeed has been said about his inconstancy and caprice ; but I am inclined to believe, that they originated less in a levity of sentiment, than from an extreme impetuosity of feeling, which rendered him prompt to take umbrage ; and his sensations of pique, where he fancied he had discovered the traces of neglect, scorn, or unkindness, took their measure of asperity from the overflowings of the opposite sentiment which preceded them, and which seldom failed to regain its ascendancy in his bosom on the return of calmer reflection. He was candid and manly in the avowal of his errors, and *his avowal* was a *reparation.* His native *fierté* never forsaking him for a moment, the value of a frank acknowledgment was enhanced tenfold towards a generous mind, from its never being attended with servility. His mind, organized only for the stronger and more acute operations of the passions, was impracticable to the efforts of superciliousness that would have depressed it into humility, and equally superior to the encroachments of venal suggestions that might have led him into the mazes of hypocrisy.

It has been observed, that he was far from averse to the incense of flattery, and could receive it tempered with less delicacy than might have been expected, as he seldom transgressed extravagantly in that way himself; where he paid a compliment, it might indeed claim the power of intoxication, as approbation from him was always an honest tribute from the warmth and sincerity of his heart. It has been sometimes represented, by those who it should seem had a view to depreciate, though they could not hope wholly to obscure that native brilliancy, which the powers of this extraordinary man had invariably bestowed on every thing that came from his lips or pen, that the history of the Ayrshire ploughboy was an ingenious fiction, fabricated for the purposes of obtaining the interests of the great, and enhancing the merits of what in reality required no foil. The Cotter's Saturday Night, Tam o' Shanter, and the Mountain Daisy, besides a number of later productions, where the maturity of his genius will be readily traced, and which will be given to the public as soon as his friends have collected and arranged them, speak sufficiently for themselves ; and had they fallen from a hand more dignified in the ranks of society than that of a peasant, they had perhaps bestowed as unusual a

grace there, as even in the humbler shade of rustic inspiration from whence they really sprung.

To the obscure scene of Burns's education, and to the laborious, though honourable station of rural industry, in which his parentage enrolled him, almost every inhabitant of the south of Scotland can give testimony. His only surviving brother, Gilbert Burns, now guides the ploughshare of his forefathers in Ayrshire, at a farm near Mauchline ; * and our poet's eldest son (a lad of nine years of age, whose early dispositions already prove him to be in some measure the inheritor of his father's talents as well as indigence) has been destined by his family to the humble employments of the loom. †

That Burns had received no classical education, and was acquainted with the Greek and Roman authors only through the medium of translations, is a fact of which all who were in the habits of conversing with him, might readily be convinced. I have indeed seldom observed him to be at a loss in conversation, unless where the dead languages and their writers have been the subjects of discussion. When I have pressed him to tell me why he never applied himself to acquire the Latin, in particular, a language which his happy memory would have so soon enabled him to be master of, he used only to reply with a smile, that he had already learnt all the Latin he desired to know, and that was *Omnia vincit amor ;* a sentence that, from his writings and most favourite pursuits, it should undoubtedly seem that he was most thoroughly versed in ; but I really believe his classic erudition extended little, if any, farther.

The penchant Burns had uniformly acknowledged for the festive pleasures of the table, and towards the fairer and softer objects of nature's creation, has been the rallying point from whence the attacks of his censors have been uniformly directed ; and to these, it must be confessed, he shewed himself no stoic. His poetical pieces blend with alternate happiness of description, the frolic spirit of the flowing bowl, or melt the heart to the tender and impassioned sentiments in which beauty always taught him to pour forth his own. But who would wish to reprove the feelings he has consecrated with such lively touches of nature ? And where is the rugged moralist who will persuade us so far to " chill the genial current of the soul," as to regret that Ovid ever celebrated his Corinna, or that Anacreon sung beneath his vine ?

I will not however undertake to be the apologist of the irregularities even of a man of genius, though I believe it is as certain that genius never was free from irregularities, as that their absolution may in a great measure be justly claimed, since it is perfectly evident that the world had continued very stationary in its intellectual acquirements, had it never given birth to any but men of plain sense. Evenness of conduct, and a due regard to the decorums of the world, have been so rarely seen to move hand in hand with genius, that some have gone as far as to say, though there I cannot wholly acquiesce, that they are even incompatible ; besides, the frailties that cast their shade over the splendour of superior merit, are more conspicuously glaring than where they are the attendants of mere medi-

* The fate of this worthy man is noticed at p. 302, where will be found a deserved tribute to his memory, (for he, too, alas ! is gone), from the pen of a friend.

† The plan of breeding the poet's eldest son a manufacturer was given up. He has been placed in one of the public offices (the Stamp-Office) in London, where he continues to fill respectably a respectable situation. His striking likeness to the poet has been often remarked.

ocrity. It is only on the gem we are disturbed to see the dust; the pebble may be soiled, and we never regard it. The eccentric intuitions of genius too often yield the soul to the wild effervescence of desires, always unbounded, and sometimes equally dangerous to the repose of others as fatal to its own. No wonder then if virtue herself be sometimes lost in the blaze of kindling animation, or that the calm monitions of reason are not invariably found sufficient to fetter an imagination which scorns the narrow limits and restrictions that would chain it to the level of ordinary minds. The child of nature, the child of sensibility, unschooled in the rigid precepts of philosophy, too often unable to control the passions which proved a source of frequent errors and misfortunes to him, Burns made his own artless apology in language more impressive than all the argumentatory vindications in the world could do, in one of his own poems, where he delineates the gradual expansion of his mind to the lessons of the "tutelary muse," who concludes an address to her pupil, almost unique for simplicity and beautiful poetry, with these lines:

> "I saw thy pulse's madd'ning play
> Wild send thee pleasure's devious way;
> Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,
> By passion driven;
> But yet the light that led astray,
> Was *light from heaven!*" *

I have already transgressed beyond the bounds I had proposed to myself, on first committing this sketch to paper, which comprehends what at least I have been led to deem the leading features of Burns's mind and character: a literary critique I do not aim at; mine is wholly fulfilled, if in these pages I have been able to delineate any of those strong traits that distinguished him,—of those talents which raised him from the plough, where he passed the bleak morning of his life, weaving his rude wreaths of poesy with the wild field-flowers that sprang around his cottage, to that enviable eminence of literary fame, where Scotland will long cherish his memory with delight and gratitude; and proudly remember, that beneath her cold sky a genius was ripened, without care or culture, that would have done honour to climes more favourable to those luxuriances—that warmth of colouring and fancy in which he so eminently excelled.

From several paragraphs I have noticed in the public prints, ever since the idea of sending this sketch to some one of them was formed, I find private animosities have not yet subsided, and that envy has not yet exhausted all her shafts. I still trust, however, that honest fame will be permanently affixed to Burns's character, which I think it will be found he *has* merited by the candid and impartial among his countrymen. And where a recollection of the imprudences that sullied his brighter qualifications interpose, let the imperfection of all human excellence be remembered at the same time, leaving those inconsistencies, which alternately exalted his nature into the seraph, and sunk it again into the man, to the tribunal which *alone* can investigate the labyrinths of the human heart—

> "Where they alike in trembling hope *repose*,
> —The bosom of his father and his *God*."
>
> GRAY'S ELEGY.

Annandale, August 7, 1796.

* Vide the Vision—Duan 2d.

PREFACE TO THE FIRST EDITION.

The following trifles are not the production of the poet, who, with all the advantages of learned art, and, perhaps, amid the elegancies and idleness of upper life, looks down for a rural theme, with an eye to Theocritus or Virgil. To the author of this, these and other celebrated names their countrymen are, at least in their original language, *a fountain shut up, and a book sealed.* Unacquainted with the necessary requisites for commencing poet by rule, he sings the sentiments and manners he felt and saw in himself and rustic compeers around him, in his and their native language.—Though a rhymer from his earliest years, at least from the earliest impulse of the softer passions, it was not till very lately that the applause, perhaps the partiality, of friendship, wakened his vanity so far as to make him think any thing of his worth showing; and none of the following works were composed with a view to the press. To amuse himself with the little creations of his own fancy, amid the toil and fatigues of a laborious life; to transcribe the various feelings, the loves, the griefs, the hopes, the fears, in his own breast; to find some kind of counterpoise to the struggles of a world, always an alien scene, a task uncouth to the poetical mind—these were his motives for courting the Muses. and in these he found poetry to be its own reward.

Now that he appears in the public character of an author, he does it with fear and trembling. So dear is fame to the rhyming tribe, that even he, an obscure, nameless bard, shrinks aghast at the thought of being branded as—An impertinent blockhead, obtruding his nonsense on the world; and, because he can make a shift to jingle a few doggerel Scotch rhymes together, looking upon himself as a poet of no small consequence, forsooth!

It is an observation of that celebrated poet, Shenstone, whose divine elegies do honour to our language, our nation, and our species, that "*Humility* has depressed many a genius to a hermit, but never raised one to fame!" If any critic catches at the word *genius*, the author tells him once for all, that he certainly looks upon himself as possessed of some poetic abilities, otherwise his publishing in the manner he has done, would be a manœuvre below the worst character, which, he hopes, his worst enemy will ever give him. But to the genius of a Ramsay, or the glorious dawnings of the poor, unfortunate Fergusson, he, with equal unaffected sincerity, declares, that, even in his highest pulse of vanity, he has not the most distant pretensions. These two justly admired Scotch poets he has often had in his eye in the following pieces; but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than for servile imitation.

To his subscribers, the author returns his most sincere thanks: Not the mercenary bow over a counter, but the heart-throbbing gratitude of the bard, conscious how much he owes to benevolence and friendship for gratifying him, if he deserves it, in that dearest wish of every poetic bosom—to be distinguished. He begs his readers, particularly the learned and the polite, who may honour him with a perusal, that they will make every allowance for education and circumstances of life; but if, after a fair, candid, and impartial criticism, he shall stand convicted of dullness and nonsense, let him he done by as he would in that case do by others—let him be condemned, without mercy, to contempt and oblivion.

TO THE

NOBLEMEN AND GENTLEMEN

OF THE

CALEDONIAN HUNT.

My Lords and Gentlemen,

A Scottish Bard, proud of the name, and whose highest ambition is to sing in his Country's service—where shall he so properly look for patronage as to the illustrious names of his Native Land; those who bear the honours and inherit the virtues of their Ancestors? The Poetic Genius of my Country found me, as the prophetic bard Elijah did Elisha—at the plough; and threw her inspiring mantle over me. She bade me sing the loves, the joys, the rural scenes and rural pleasures of my native soil, in my native tongue; I turned my wild, artless notes, as she inspired.—She whispered me to come to this ancient Metropolis of Caledonia, and lay my Songs under your honoured protection: I now obey her dictates.

Though much indebted to your goodness, I do not approach you, my Lords and Gentlemen, in the usual style of dedication, to thank you for past favours; that path is so hackneyed by prostituted learning, that honest rusticity is ashamed of it. Nor do I present this Address with the venal soul of a servile Author, looking for a continuation of those favours: I was bred to the Plough, and am independent. I come to claim the common Scottish name with you, my illustrious Countrymen; and to tell the world that I glory in the title. I come to congratulate my Country, that the blood of her ancient heroes still runs uncontaminated; and that from your courage, knowledge, and public-spirit, she may expect protection, wealth, and liberty. In the last place, I come to profer my warmest wishes to the Great Fountain of Honour, the Monarch of the Universe, for your welfare and happiness.

When you go forth to awaken the Echoes, in the ancient and favourite amusement of your forefathers, may Pleasure ever be of your party; and may Social Joy await your return: When harassed in courts or camps

with the jostlings of bad men and bad measures, may the honest consciousness of injured worth attend your return to your Native Seats; and may Domestic Happiness, with a smiling welcome, meet you at your gates! May corruption shrink at your kindling indignant glance; and may tyranny in the Ruler, and licentiousness in the People, equally find an inexorable foe!

I have the honour to be,
With the sincerest gratitude,
and highest respect,
My Lords and Gentlemen,
Your most devoted humble servant,

ROBERT BURNS.

EDINBURGH,
April 4, 1787.

POETRY.

POETRY.

POEMS,

CHIEFLY SCOTTISH.

THE TWA DOGS:

A TALE.

'Twas in that place o' Scotland's isle,
That bears the name o' *Auld King Coil*,
Upon a bonnie day in June,
When wearing thro' the afternoon,
Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame,
Forgather'd ance upon a time.

The first I'll name they ca'd him *Cæsar*,
Was keepit for his Honour's pleasure:
His hair, his size, his mouth, his lugs,
Show'd he was nane o' Scotland's dogs;
But whalpit some place far abroad,
Where sailors gang to fish for cod.

His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar
Show'd him the gentleman and scholar:
But tho' he was o' high degree,
The fient a pride na pride had he;
But wad hae spent an hour caressin',
Ev'n with a tinkler gipsey's messin'.
At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
And stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him.

The tither was a ploughman's collie,
A rhyming, ranting, raving billie,
Wha for his friend an' comrade had him,
And in his freaks had Luath ca'd him,
After some dog in Highland sang,*
Was made lang syne—Lord knows how lang.

He was a gash an' faithfu' tyke,
As ever lap a sheugh or dyke.
His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Aye gat him friends in ilka place.
His breast was white, his towzie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swurl.

Nae doubt but they were fain o' ither,
An' unco pack an' thick thegither;
Wi' social noise whyles snuff'd and snowkit;
Whyles mice and mowdieworts they howkit;
Whyles scour'd awa in lang excursion,
An' worry'd ither in diversion;
Until wi' daffin weary grown,
Upon a knowe they sat them down,
And there began a lang digression,
About the *lords o' the creation*.

CÆSAR.

I've often wonder'd honest *Luath*,
What sort o' life poor dogs like you have;
An' when the gentry's life I saw,
What way poor bodies lived ava.

Our Laird gets in his racked rents,
His coals, his kain, and a' his stents:
He rises when he likes himsel';
His flunkies answer at the bell;
He ca's his coach, he ca's his horse;
He draws a bonnie silken purse,
As lang's my tail, whare, thro' the steeks,
The yellow letter'd Geordie keeks.

Frae morn to e'en its nought but toiling,
At baking, roasting, frying, boiling;
An' tho' the gentry fast are stechin',
Yet ev'n the ha' folk fill their pechan
Wi' sauce, ragouts, and sic like trashtrie,
That's little short o' downright wastrie.
Our Whipper-in, wee blastit wonner,
Poor worthless elf, it eats a dinner,
Better than ony tenant man
His Honour has in a' the lan':
An' what poor cot-folk pit their painch in,
I own its past my comprehension.

LUATH.

Trowth, Cæsar, whyles they're fash't eneugh
A cotter howkin in a sheugh,
Wi' dirty stanes biggin a dyke,
Baring a quarry, and sic like,
Himself, a wife, he thus sustains,
A smytrie o' wee duddie weans,
An' nought but his han' darg, to keep
Them right and tight in thack an' rape.

* Cuchullin's dog in Ossian's Fingal.

An' when they meet wi' sair disasters,
Like loss o' health, or want of masters,
Ye maist wad think, a wee touch langer,
An' they maun starve o' cauld and hunger;
But, how it comes, I never ken'd yet,
They're maistly wonderfu' contented;
An' buirdly chiels, an' clever hizzies,
Are bred in sic a way as this is.

CÆSAR.

But then to see how ye're negleckit,
How huff'd, and cuff'd, and disrespeckit!
L—d, man, our gentry care as little
For delvers, ditchers, and sic cattle;
They gang as saucy by poor fo'k,
As I wad by a stinking brock.

I've notic'd on our Laird's court day
An' mony a time my heart's been wae,
Poor tenant bodies, scant o' cash,
How they maun thole a factor's snash;
He'll stamp an' threaten, curse an' swear,
He'll apprehend them, poind their gear;
While they maun stan', wi' aspect humble,
An' hear it a', an' fear an' tremble!

I see how folk live that hae riches;
But surely poor folk maun be wretches.

LUATH.

They're nae sae wretched's ane wad think;
Tho' constantly on poortith's brink:
They're sae accustomed wi' the sight,
The view o't gi'es them little fright.

Then chance an' fortune are sae guided,
They're aye in less or mair provided;
An' tho' fatigu'd wi' close employment,
A blink o' rest's a sweet enjoyment.

The dearest comfort o' their lives,
Their grushie weans an' faithfu' wives;
The prattlin things are just their pride
That sweetens a' their fire-side.

An' whyles twalpennie worth o' nappy
Can mak the bodies unco happy;
They lay aside their private cares,
To mind the Kirk and State affairs:
They'll talk o' patronage and priests,
Wi' kindling fury in their breasts,
Or tell what new taxation's comin',
And ferlie at the folk in Lon'on.

As bleak-fac'd Hallowmas returns,
They get the jovial, rantin' kirns,
When *rural life*, o' every station,
Unite in common recreation:
Love blinks, Wit slaps, an' social Mirth,
Forgets there's Care upo' the earth.

That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty winds;
The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream
An' sheds a heart-inspiring steam;
The luntin' pipe, and sneeshin' mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid will:
The cantie auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' thro' the house,—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

Still it's owre true that ye hae said,
Sic game is now owre often play'd.
There's monie a creditable stock
O' decent, honest, fawsont fo'k,
Are riven out baith root and branch,
Some rascal's pridefu' greed to quench,
Wha thinks to knit himself the faster
In favours wi' some gentle master,
Wha aiblins thrang a parliamentin',
For Britain's guid his saul indentin'—

CÆSAR.

Haith, lad, ye little ken about it:
For Britain's guid!—guid faith, I doubt it!
Say, rather, gaun as *Premiers* lead him,
An' sayin' *aye* or *no's* they bid him:
At operas an' plays parading,
Mortgaging, gambling, masquerading;
Or may be, in a frolic daft,
To *Hague* or *Calais* takes a waft,
To mak a tour, and tak a whirl,
To learn *bon ton* and see the worl'.

There, at *Vienna*, or *Versailles*,
He rives his father's auld entails!
Or by *Madrid* he takes the rout,
To thrum guitars and fecht wi' nowt;
Or down Italian vista startles,
Wh—re-hunting among groves o' myrtles:
Then bouses drumly German water,
To mak himsel' look fair and fatter,
An' clear the consequential sorrows,
Love gifts of Carnival signoras.
For Britain's guid!—for her destruction!
Wi' dissipation, feud, an' faction.

LUATH.

Hech man! dear sirs! is that the gate
They waste sae mony a braw estate!
Are we sae foughten an' harass'd
For gear to gang that gate at last!

O would they stay aback frae courts,
An' please themselves wi' countra sports,
It wad for every ane be better,
The Laird, the Tenant, an' the Cotter!
For thae frank, rantin', ramblin' billies,
Fient haet o' them's ill-hearted fellows;
Except for breakin' o' their timmer,
Or speakin' lightly o' their limmer,
Or shootin' o' a hare or moor-cock,
The ne'er a bit they're ill to poor folk.

But will ye tell me, Master *Cæsar*,
Sure great folk's life's a life o' pleasure!
Nae cauld or hunger e'er can steer them,
The very thought o't need na fear them.

CÆSAR.

L—d, man, were ye but whyles where I am,
The gentles ye wad ne'er envy 'em.

It's true, they need na starve or sweat,
Thro' winter's cauld or simmer's heat;
They've nae sair wark to craze their banes,
An' fill auld age wi' gripes an' granes:
But human bodies are sic fools,
For a' their colleges an' schools,
That when nae real ills perplex them,
They mak enow themselves to vex them.
An' aye the less they hae to sturt them,
In like proportion less will hurt them;
A country fellow at the pleugh,
His acres till'd, he's right eneugh;
A country girl at her wheel,
Her dizzens done, she's unco weel;
But Gentlemen, an' Ladies warst,
Wi' ev'ndown want o' wark are curst.
They loiter, lounging, lank, an' lazy;
Tho' deil haet ails them, yet uneasy;
Their days insipid, dull, an' tasteless;
Their nights unquiet, lang, an' restless;
An' ev'n their sports, their balls, an' races,
Their gallopin' through public places.
There's sic parade, sic pomp, an' art,
The joy can scarcely reach the heart.
The men cast out in party matches,
Then sowther a' in deep debauches:
Ae night they're mad wi' drink an wh–ring,
Neist day their life is past enduring.
The ladies arm-in-arm in clusters,
As great and gracious a' as sisters;
But hear their absent thoughts o' ither,
They're a' run deils an' jads thegither.
Whyles o'er the wee bit cup and platie,
They sip the scandal potion pretty;
Or lee lang nights, wi' crabbit leuks
Pore owre the devil's pictur'd beuks;
Stake on a chance a farmer's stackyard,
An' cheat like ony unhang'd blackguard.

There's some exception, man an' woman;
But this is Gentry's life in common.

By this the sun was out o' sight:
An' darker gloaming brought the night:
The bum-clock humm'd wi' lazy drone;
The kye stood rowtin' i' the loan:
When up they gat an shook their lugs,
Rejoic'd they were na *men* but *dogs;*
And each took aff his several way,
Resolv'd to meet some ither day.

SCOTCH DRINK.

Gie him strong drink, until he wink,
That's sinking in despair;
An' liquor guid to fire his bluid,
That's prest wi' grief an' care;
There let him bouse, and deep carouse
Wi' bumpers flowing o'er,
Till he forgets his *loves* or *debts*,
An' minds his griefs no more.
Solomon's Proverbs, xxxi. 6, 7.

LET other poets raise a fracas,
'Bout vines, and wines, and drunken *Bacchus*,
An' crabbit names an' stories wrack us,
An' grate our lug,
I sing the juice *Scots bear* can mak us,
In glass or jug.

O Thou, my *Muse!* guid auld *Scotch Drink*
Whether thro' wimpling worms thou jink,
Or, richly brown, ream o'er the brink,
In glorious faem,
Inspire me, till I lisp and wink,
To sing thy name.

Let husky Wheat the haughs adorn,
And Aits set up their awnie horn,
An' Pease and Beans at e'en or morn,
Perfume the plain,
Leeze me on thee, *John Barleycorn*,
Thou king o' grain!

On thee aft Scotland chows her cood,
In souple scones, the wail o' food!
Or tumblin' in the boiling flood,
Wi' kail an' beef;
But when thou pours thy strong heart's blood,
There thou shines chief.

Food fills the wame, an' keeps us livin';
Tho' life's a gift no worth receivin',
When heavy dragg'd wi' pine and grievin';
But oil'd by thee,
The wheels o' life gae down-hill, scrievin',
Wi' rattlin' glee.

Thou clears the head o' doited Lear;
Thou cheers the heart o' drooping Care;
Thou strings the nerves o' Labour sair;
At's weary toil;
Thou even brightens dark Despair
Wi' gloomy smile.

Aft, clad in massy silver weed,
Wi' Gentles thou erects thy head;
Yet humbly kind in time o' need,
The poor man's wine,
His wee drap parritch, or his bread,
Thou kitchens fine.

Thou art the life o' public haunts;
But thee, what were our fairs and rants?
Ev'n godly meetings o' the saunts,
By thee inspir'd,
When gaping they besiege the tents,
Are doubly fir'd.

That merry night we get the corn in,
O sweetly then thou reams the horn in!
Or reekin' on a New-year morning
In cog or bicker

An' just a wee drap sp'ritual burn in,
An' gusty sucker!

When Vulcan gies his bellows breath,
An' ploughmen gather wi' their graith,
O rare! to see the fizz an' freath
I' the lugget caup!
Then *Burnewin* * comes on like death
At ev'ry chaup.

Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel',
Brings hard owrehip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong forehammer,
Till block an' studdie ring an' reel
Wi' dinsome clamour.

When skirlin weanies see the light,
Thou maks the gossips clatter bright,
How fumlin' cuifs their dearies slight,
Wae worth the name!
Nae howdie gets a social night,
Or plack frae them.

When neebours anger at a plea,
An' just as wud as wud can be,
How easy can the *barley bree*
Cement the quarrel;
It's aye the cheapest lawyer's fee,
To taste the barrel.

Alake! that e'er my Muse has reason
To wyte her countrymen wi' treason;
But mony daily weet their weason
Wi' liquors nice,
An' hardly, in a winter's season,
E'er spier her price.

Wae worth that *brandy*, burning trash,
Fell source o' monie a pain an' brash!
Twins monie a poor, doylt, drunken hash,
O' half his days;
An' sends, beside, auld Scotland's cash
To her warst faes.

Ye Scots, wha wish auld Scotland well!
Ye chief, to you my tale I tell,
Poor plackless devils like mysel'!
It sets you ill,
Wi' bitter, dearthfu' wines to mell,
Or foreign gill.

May gravels round his blather wrench,
An' gouts torment him inch by inch,
Wha twists his gruntle wi' a glunch
O' sour disdain,
Out owre a glass o' *whisky punch*
Wi' honest men.

O *Whisky!* soul o' plays an' pranks!
Accept a Bardie's humble thanks!
When wanting thee, what tuneless cranks
Are my poor verses!

Thou comes——they rattle i' their ranks
At ither's a—s!

Thee, *Ferintosh!* O sadly lost!
Scotland, lament frae coast to coast!
Now colic grips, and barkin hoast,
May kill us a';
For loyal Forbes' chartered boast
Is ta'en awa'!

Thae curst horse leeches o' th' Excise,
Wha mak the *Whisky Stells* their prize!
Haud up thy han', Deil! ance, twice, thrice!
There, seize the blinkers!
An' bake them up in brunstane pies
For poor d—n'd drinkers.

Fortune! if thou'll but gie me still
Hale breeks, a scone, an' *Whisky gill*,
An' rowth o' rhyme to rave at will,
Tak a' the rest,
An' deal't about as thy blind skill
Directs thee best.

THE AUTHOR'S

EARNEST CRY AND PRAYER *

TO THE

SCOTCH REPRESENTATIVES

IN THE

HOUSE OF COMMONS.

Dearest of Distillation! last and best——
——How art thou lost!——*Parody on Milton.*

Ye Irish Lords, Ye Knights an' Squires,
Wha *represent* our brughs an' shires,
And doucely manage our affairs
In parliament,
To you a simple Poets prayers
Are humbly sent.

Alas! my roupet Muse is hearse!
Your honours' hearts wi' grief 'twad pierce
To see her sittin' on her a—
Low i' the dust,
An' screichin' out prosaic verse,
An' like to brust!

Tell them wha hae the chief direction,
Scotland an' *me's* in great affliction,
E'er sin' they laid that curst restriction
On *Aquavitæ*;
An' rouse them up to strong conviction
An' move their pity.

* *Burnewin—Burn-the-wind*—the blacksmith—an appropriate title.

* This was written before the act anent the Scotch Distilleries, of session 1786; for which Scotland and the Author return their most grateful thanks.

Stand forth, an' tell yon *Premier Youth*,
The honest, open, naked truth:
Tell him o' mine and Scotland's drouth,
His servants humble:
The muckle devil blaw ye south,
If ye dissemble!

Does ony great man glunch an' gloom!
Speak out, an' never fash your thumb:
Let posts an' pensions sink or soom
Wi' them wha grant 'em:
If honestly they canna come,
Far better want 'em.

In gath'ring votes you were na slack;
Now stand as tightly by your tack;
Ne'er claw your lug, an fidge your back,
An' hum an' haw;
But raise your arm, an' tell your crack
Before them a'

Paint Scotland greeting owre her thrissle;
Her mutchkin stoup as toom's a whissle;
An' d-mn'd Excisemen in a bussle,
Seizin' a *stell*,
Triumphant crushin't like a mussel,
Or lampit shell.

Then on the tither hand present her,
A blackguard Smuggler right behint her,
An' cheek-for-chow, a chuffie Vintner,
Colleaguing join,
Picking her pouch as bare as winter
Of a' kind coin.

Is there, that bears the name o' *Scot*,
But feels his heart's bluid rising hot,
To see his poor auld Mither's *pot*
Thus dung in staves,
An' plunder'd o' her hindmost groat
By gallows knaves?

Alas! I'm but a nameless wight,
Trode i' the mire out o' sight!
But could I like *Montgomeries* fight,
Or gab like *Boswell*,
There's some sark-necks I wad draw tight,
An' tie some hose well.

God bless your Honours, can ye see't,
The kind, auld, cantie Carlin greet,
An' no get warmly to your feet,
An gar them hear it,
An' tell them wi' a patriot heat,
Ye winna bear it!

Some o' you nicely ken the laws,
To round the period an' pause,
An' wi' rhetoric clause on clause
To mak harangues;
Then echo thro' Saint Stephen's wa's
Auld Scotland's wrangs.

Dempster, a true blue Scot I'se warran;
Thee, aith-detesting, chaste *Kilkerran*;*

* Sir Adam Ferguson.

An' that glib-gabbet Highland Baron,
The Laird o' *Graham*;*
An' ane, a chap that's damn'd auldfarran,
Dundas his name.

Erskine, a spunkie Norland billie;
True *Campbells*, *Frederick* an' *Ilay*;
An' *Livingstone*, the bauld *Sir Willie*;
An' mony ithers,
Whom auld Demosthenes or Tully
Might own for brithers.

Arouse, my boys! exert your mettle,
To get auld Scotland back her *kettle*;
Or faith! I'll wad my new pleugh-pettle,
Ye'll see't or lang,
She'll teach you, wi' a reekin' whittle,
Anither sang.

This while she's been in canc'rous mood,
Her *lost Militia* fir'd her bluid;
(Deil na they never mair do guid,
Play'd her that pliskie!)
An' now she's like to rin red-wud
About her Whisky.

An' L—d if ance they pit her till't,
Her tartan petticoat she'll kilt,
An' durk an' pistol at her belt,
She'll tak the streets,
An' rin her whittle to the hilt,
I' the first she meets!

For G—d sake, Sirs! then speak her fair,
An' straik her cannie wi' the hair,
An' to the muckle house repair,
Wi' instant speed,
An' strive, wi' a' your wit an' lear,
To get remead.

Yon ill-tongu'd tinkler, *Charlie Fox*,
May taunt you wi' his jeers an' mocks;
But gie him't het, my hearty cocks!
E'en cowe the caddie
An' send him to his dicing box
An' sportin' lady.

Tell yon guid bluid o' auld *Bockonnock's*,
I'll be his debt twa mashlum bannocks,
An' drink his health in auld *Nanse Tinnocks*,†
Nine times a week,
If he some scheme, like tea and winnocks,
Wad kindly seek.

Could he some *commutation* broach,
I'll pledge my aith in guid braid Scotch,
He need na fear their foul reproach
Nor erudition,
Yon mixtie-maxtie queer hotch-potch,
The *Coalition*.

Auld Scotland has a raucle tongue;
She's just a devil wi' a rung;

* The present Duke of Montrose.—(1800.)
† A worthy old Hostess of the Author's in *Mauchline*, where he sometimes studies Politics over a glass of guid auld *Scotch Drink*.

An' if she promise auld or young
To tak their part,
Tho' by the neck she should be strung,
She'll no desert.

An' now, ye chosen *Five-and-Forty*,
May still your Mither's heart support ye:
Then, tho' a Minister grow dorty,
An' kick your place,
Ye'll snap your fingers, poor an' hearty,
Before his face.

God bless your Honours a' your days,
Wi' soups o' kail and brats o' claise,
In spite o' a' the thievish kaes
That haunt *St Jamie's!*
Your humble poet sings an' prays
While *Rab* his name is.

POSTSCRIPT.

Let half-starv'd slaves, in warmer skies
See future wines, rich clust'ring rise;
Their lot auld Scotland ne'er envies,
But blithe and frisky,
She eyes her freeborn martial boys,
Tak aff their Whisky.

What tho' their Phœbus kinder warms,
While fragrance blooms and beauty charms!
When wretches range, in famish'd swarms,
The scented groves,
Or hounded forth, dishonour arms
In hungry droves.

Their gun's a burden on their shouther;
They downa bide the stink o' pouther;
Their bauldest thought's a hank'ring swither
To stan' or rin,
Till skelp—a shot—they're aff, a' throwther,
To save their skin.

But bring a *Scotsman* frae his hill,
Clap in his cheek a Highland gill,
Say, such is royal *George's* will,
An' there's the foe,
He has nae thought but how to kill
Twa at a blow.

Nae cauld, faint-hearted doubtings tease him;
Death comes, with fearless eye he sees him;
Wi' bluidy hand a welcome gies him;
An' when he fa's,
His latest draught o' breathin' lea'es him
In faint huzzas.

Sages their solemn een may steek,
An' raise a philosophic reek,
An' physically causes seek,
In clime an' season;
But tell me *Whisky's* name in Greek,
I'll tell the reason.

Scotland, my auld, respected Mither!
Tho' whyles ye moistify your leather,
Till whare ye sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam;
(*Freedom* and *Whisky* gang thegither!)
Tak aff your dram!

THE HOLY FAIR.*

A robe of seeming truth and trust
Hid crafty Observation;
And secret hung with poison'd crust,
The dirk of Defamation:
A mask that like the gorget show'd
Dye-varying on the pigeon;
And for a mantle large and broad,
He wrapt him in *Religion*.
Hypocrisy-a-la-mode.

I.

Upon a simmer Sunday morn,
When Nature's face is fair,
I walked forth to view the corn,
An' snuff the callar air.
The rising sun owre *Galston* muirs,
Wi' glorious light was glintin';
The hares were hirplin' down the furs,
The lav'rocks they were chantin'
Fu' sweet that day.

II.

As lightsomely I glowr'd abroad
To see a scene sae gay,
Three hizzies, early at the road,
Cam skelpin' up the way;
Twa had manteeles o' dolefu' black,
But ane wi' lyart lining;
The third that gaed a wee a-back,
Was in the fashion shining,
Fu' gay that day.

III.

The *twa* appear'd like sisters twin,
In feature, form, an' claes:
Their visage wither'd, lang, an' thin,
An' sour as ony slaes;
The *third* came up, hap-stap-an'-loup,
As light as ony lammie,
An' wi' a curchie low did stoop,
As soon as e'er she saw me,
Fu' kind that day.

IV.

Wi bannet aff, quoth I, 'Sweet lass,
I think ye seem to ken me;
I'm sure I've seen that bonnie face,
But yet I canna name ye.'
Quo' she, an' laughin' as she spak,
An' tak's me by the hands,
"Ye, for my sake, ha'e gi'en the feck
Of a' the ten commands
A screed some day.

* *Holy Fair* is a common phrase in the west of Scotland for a sacramental occasion.

V.

" My name is *Fun*—your cronie dear,
The nearest friend ye ha'e ;
An' this is *Superstition* here,
An' that's *Hypocrisy*.
I'm gaun to ——— *Holy Fair*,
To spend an hour in daffin' ;
Gin ye'll go there, yon runkled pair,
We will get famous laughin'
At them this day."

VI.

Quoth I, ' With a' my heart I'll do't ;
I'll get my Sunday's sark on,
An' meet you on the holy spot ;
Faith we'se hae fine remarkin' !'
Then I gaed hame at crowdie time,
An' soon I made me ready ;
For roads were clad, frae side to side,
Wi' monie a weary body,
In droves that day.

VII.

Here farmers gash, in ridin' graith
Gaed hoddin' by their cotters :
Their swankies young, in braw braid-claith
Are springin' o'er the gutters.
The lasses, skelpin' barefoot, thrang,
In silks an' scarlets glitter ;
Wi' *sweet-milk cheese* in monie a whang,
An' *farls* bak'd wi' butter,
Fu' crump that day.

VIII.

When by the *plate* we set our nose,
Weel heaped up wi' ha'pence,
A greedy glowr Black Bonnet throws,
An' we maun draw our tippence.
Then in we go to see the show,
On ev'ry side they're gatherin',
Some carrying deals, some chairs an' stools,
An' some are busy bletherin',
Right loud that day.

IX.

Here stands a shed to fend the show'rs,
An' screen our countra Gentry,
There, *racer Jess*, an' twa-three whores,
Are blinkin' at the entry.
Here sits a raw of tittlin' jades,
Wi' heavin' breast and bare neck,
An' there a batch of wabster lads,
Blackguardin' frae K————ck,
For *fun* this day.

X.

Here some are thinkin' on their sins,
An' some upo' their claes ;
Ane curses feet that fyl'd his shins,
Anither sighs an' prays ;
On this hand sits a chosen swatch,
Wi' screw'd up grace-proud faces ;
On that a set o' chaps at watch,
Thrang winkin' on the lasses
To chairs that day.

XI.

O happy is the man an' blest !
Nae wonder that it pride him !
Wha's ain dear lass, that he likes best,
Comes clinkin' down beside him !
Wi' arm repos'd on the chair-back,
He sweetly does compose him !
Which, by degrees, slips round her neck,
An's loof upon her bosom
Unkenn'd that day.

XII.

Now a' the congregation o'er
Is silent expectation ;
For ——— speels the holy door
Wi' tidings o' damnation.
Should *Hornie*, as in ancient days,
'Mang sons o' God present him,
The vera sight o' ———'s face,
To's ain het hame had sent him
Wi' fright that day.

XIII.

Hear how he clears the points o' faith
Wi' rattlin' an' thumpin' !
Now meekly calm, now wild in wrath,
He's stampin' an' he's jumpin' !
His lengthen'd chin, his turn'd-up snout,
His eldritch squeel and gestures,
Oh, how they fire the heart devout,
Like cantharidian plasters,
On sic a day !

XIV.

But hark ! the *tent* has chang'd its voice ;
There's peace and rest nae langer :
For a' the *real judges* rise,
They canna sit for anger.
——— opens out his cauld harangues
On practice and on morals ;
An' aff the godly pour in thrangs,
To gie the jars an' barrels
A lift that day.

XV.

What signifies his barren shine
Of moral pow'rs and reason ?
His English style, an' gesture fine,
Are a' clean out o' season.
Like *Socrates* or *Antonine*,
Or some auld pagan Heathen,
The moral man he does define,
But ne'er a word o' faith in
That's right that day

XVI.

In guid time comes an antidote
Against sic poison'd nostrum ;
For ———, frae the water-fit,
Ascends the holy rostrum :
See, up he's got the word o' God,
An' meek an' mim has view'd it,

While *Common-sense* has ta'en the road,
An' aff, an' up the Cowgate,*
Fast, fast, that day.

XVII.

Wee ——— neist the guard relieves,
An' orthodoxy raibles,
Tho' in his heart he weel believes,
And thinks it auld wives' fables:
But, faith; the birkie wants a manse
So cannily he hums them;
Altho' his carnal wit and sense
Like hafflins-ways o'ercomes him
At times that day.

XVIII.

Now but an' ben, the change-house fills,
Wi' yill-caup commentators:
Here's crying out for bakes and gills,
And there the pint stoup clatters;
While thick an' thrang, an' loud an' lang,
Wi' logic, an' wi' Scripture,
They raise a din, that in the end,
Is like to breed a rupture
O' wrath that day.

XIX.

Leeze me on Drink! it gi'es us mair
Than either School or College:
It kindles wit, it waukens lair,
It pangs us fou o' knowledge.
Be't whisky gill, or penny wheep,
Or ony stronger potion,
It never fails, on drinking deep,
To kittle up our notion
By night or day.

XX.

The lads an' lasses, blythely bent
To mind baith saul an' body,
Sit round the table weel content,
An' steer about the toddy.
On this ane's dress, an' that ane's leuk,
They're makin' observations;
While some are cozie i' the neuk,
An' forming assignations
To meet some day.

XXI.

But now the L—d's ain trumpet touts,
Till a' the hills are rairin',
An' echoes back return the shouts;
Black ——— is na spairin':
His piercing words, like Highland swords,
Divide the joints an' marrow;
His talk o' Hell, where devils dwell,
Our very sauls does harrow†
Wi' fright that day.

XXII.

A vast, unbottom'd boundless pit,
Fill'd fou o' lowin' brunstane,
Wha's ragin' flame an' scorchin' heat,
Wad melt the hardest whun-stane!
The half asleep start up wi' fear,
An' think they hear it roarin',
When presently it does appear,
'Twas but some neighbour snorin'
Asleep that day.

XXIII.

'Twad be owre lang a tale to tell
How monie stories past,
An' how they crowded to the yill,
When they were a' dismist:
How drink gaed round, in cogs an' caups,
Amang the furms an' benches;
An' cheese an' bread, frae women's laps,
Was dealt about in lunches
An' dawds that day.

XXIV.

In comes a gaucie, gash guidwife,
An' sits down by the fire,
Syne draws her kebbuck an' her knife,
The lasses they are shyer.
The auld guidmen, about the *grace*,
Frae side to side they bother,
Till some ane by his bonnet lays,
An' gi'es them't like a tether,
Fu' lang that day.

XXV.

Waesucks! for him that gets nae lass,
Or lasses that hae naething!
Sma' need has he to say a grace
Or melvie his braw claithing!
O wives be mindfu' ance yoursel'
How bonnie lads ye wanted,
An' dinna for a kebbuck-heel,
Let lasses be affronted
On sic a day!

XXVI.

Now *Clinkumbell*, wi' rattlin' tow,
Begins to jow an' croon;
Some swagger hame, the best they dow,
Some wait the afternoon.
At slaps the billies halt a blink,
Till lasses strip their shoon:
Wi' faith an' hope, an' love an' drink,
They're a' in famous tune,
For crack that day.

XXVII.

How monie hearts this day converts
O' sinners and o' lasses!
Their hearts o' stane, gin night, are gane
As saft as ony flesh is.
There's some are fou o' love divine;
There's some are fou o' brandy;
An' mony jobs that day begin,
May end in houghmagandie
Some ither day.

* A street so called, which faces the *tent* in ——

† Shakespeare's Hamlet.

DEATH AND DOCTOR HORN-BOOK:

A TRUE STORY.

Some books are lies frae end to end,
And some great lies were never penn'd:
Ev'n Ministers, they hae been kenn'd,
In holy rapture,
A rousing whid, at times, to vend,
And nail't wi' Scripture.

But this that I am gaun to tell,
Which lately on a night befell,
Is just as true's the De'ils in hell
Or Dublin city:
That e'er he nearer comes oursel'
'S a muckle pity.

The Clachan yill had made me canty,
I was nae fou, but just had plenty;
I stacher'd whiles, but yet took tent aye
To free the ditches;
An' hillocks, stanes, an' bushes, kenn'd aye
Frae ghaists an' witches.

The rising moon began to glow'r
The distant *Cumnock* hills out-owre;
To count her horns, wi' a' my power,
I set mysel';
But whether she had three or four,
I couldna tell.

I was come round about the hill,
And todlin down on *Wille's mill*,
Setting my staff wi' a' my skill,
To keep me sicker;
Tho' leeward whyles, against my will,
I took a bicker.

I there wi' *Something* did forgather,
That put me in an eerie swither:
An' awfu' scythe, out-owre ae shouther,
Clear-dangling, hang;
A three-taed leister on the ither,
Lay, large and lang.

Its stature seem'd lang Scotch ells twa,
The queerest shape that e'er I saw,
For fient a wame it had ava;
And then, its shanks,
They were as thin, as sharp, an' sma'
As cheeks o' branks.

'Guid-een,' quo' I; 'Friend! hae ye been mawin',
When ither folk are busy sawin'?' *
It seem'd to mak' a kind o' stan',
But naething spak:
At length, says I, 'Friend, where ye gaun,
Will ye go back?'

It spak right howe,—'My name is *Death*,
But be na fley'd.'—Quoth I, 'Guid faith,
Ye're maybe come to stap my breath;
But tent me, billie:
I red ye weel, tak care e' skaith,
See there's a gully!'

'Guidman,' quo' he, 'put up your whittle,
I'm no design'd to try its mettle;
But if I did, I wad be kittle
To be mislear'd,
I wadna mind it, no, that spittle
Out owre my beard.

'Weel, weel!' says I, 'a bargain be't;
Come, gie's your hand, an' sae we're gree't;
We'll ease our shanks an' tak a seat,
Come gie's your news;
This while * ye hae been mony a gate,
At mony a house.'

'Ay, ay!' quo' he, an' shook his head,
'Its been a lang, lang time indeed
Sin' I began to nick the thread,
An' choke the breath:
Folk maun do something for their bread,
An' sae maun *Death*.

'Sax thousand years are nearhand fled
Sin' I was to the butching bred,
An' mony a scheme in vain's been laid,
To stap or scar me;
Till ane *Hornbook*'s † taen up the trade,
An' faith, he'll waur me.

'Ye ken *Jock Hornbook*, i' the Clachan,
Deil mak his king's hood in a spleuchan!
He's grown sae weel acquaint wi' *Buchan* ‡
An' ither chaps,
The weans haud out their fingers laughin'
An' pouk my hips.

'See, here's a scythe, and there's a dart,
They hae pierc'd mony a gallant heart:
But Doctor *Hornbook*, wi' his art
And cursed skill,
Has made them baith no worth a f—t,
Damn'd haet they'll kill.

''Twas but yestreen, nae farther gaen,
I threw a noble throw at ane;
Wi' less, I'm sure, I've hundreds slain;
But deil-ma-care,
It just play'd dirl on the bane,
But did nae mair.

'*Hornbook* was by, wi' ready art,
And had sae fortified the part,
That when I looked to my dart,
It was sae blunt,
Fient haet o't wad hae pierc'd the heart
Of a kail-runt.

'I drew my scythe in sic a fury,

* This rencounter happened in seed-time, 1785.

* An epidemical fever was then raging in that country.

† This gentleman, *Dr. Hornbook*, is, professionally a brother of the Sovereign Order of the Ferula; but by intuition and inspiration, is at once an Apothecary, Surgeon, and Physician.

‡ Buchan's Domestic Medicine.

I nearhand coupit wi' my hurry,
But yet the bauld *Apothecary*
Withstood the shock;
I might as weel hae tried a quarry
O' hard whin rock.

'Ev'n them he canna get attended,
Altho' their face he ne'er had ken'd it,
Just ——— in a kail-blade, and send it,
As soon's he smells't,
Baith their disease, and what will mend it,
At once he tells't.

'An' then a' doctors' saws and whittles,
Of a' dimensions, shapes, an' mettles,
A' kinds o' boxes, mugs, an' bottles,
He's sure to hae;
Their Latin names as fast he rattles
As A B C.

'Calces o' fossils, earths, and trees;
True Sal-marinum o' the seas;
The Farina of beans and pease,
He has't in plenty;
Aqua-fontis, what you please,
He can content ye.

'Forbye some new, uncommon weapons,
Urinus Spiritus of capons;
Or Mite-horn shavings, filings, scrapings;
Distill'd *per se;*
Sal-alkali o' Midge-tail clippins,
An' mony mae.'

'Waes me for *Johnny Ged's Hole* * now;'
Quo' I, 'If that the news be true!
His braw calf-ward where gowans grew,
Sae white an' bonnie,
Nae doubt they'll rive it wi' the plough;
They'll ruin *Johnny!*'

The creature grain'd an eldritch laugh,
An' says, 'Ye need na yoke the pleugh,
Kirk-yards will soon be till'd eneugh,
Tak ye nae fear;
They'll a' be trench'd wi' mony a sheugh
In twa-three year.

'Whare I kill'd ane a fair strae death,
By loss o' blood or want o' breath,
This night I'm free to tak my aith,
That *Hornbook's* skill
Has clad a score i' their last claith,
By drap an' pill.

'An honest Wabster to his trade,
Whase wife's twa nieves were scarce weel bred,
Gat tippence-worth to mend her head,
When it was sair;
The wife slade cannie to her bed,
But ne'er spak mair.

'A countra Laird had ta'en the batts,
Or some curmurring in his guts,
His only son for *Hornbook* sets,
An' pays him well;
The lad, for twa guid gimmer pets,
Was laird himsel'.

'A bonnie lass, ye ken her name,
Some ill-brewn drink had hov'd her wame;
She trusts hersel', to hide the shame,
In *Hornbook's* care;
Horn sent her aff to her lang hame,
To hide it there.

'That's just a swatch o' *Hornbook's* way;
Thus goes he on from day to day,
Thus does he poison, kill, an' slay,
An's weel paid for't;
Yet stops me o' my lawfu' prey,
Wi' his damn'd dirt.

'But hark! I'll tell you of a plot,
Though dinna ye be speaking o't;
I'll nail the self-conceited sot,
As dead's a herrin';
Neist time we meet, I'll wad a groat,
He gets his fairin'!'

But just as he began to tell,
The auld kirk-hammer strak the bell,
Some wee short hour ayont the *twal,*
Which rais'd us baith
I took the way that pleased mysel',
And sae did *Death.*

* The grave-digger.

THE BRIGS OF AYR:

A POEM.

INSCRIBED TO J. B———, ESQ. AYR.

THE simple Bard, rough at the rustic plough,
Learning his tuneful trade from every bough;
The chanting linnet, or the mellow thrush,
Hailing the setting sun, sweet, in the green thorn bush:
The soaring lark, the perching red-breast shrill,
Or deep-toned plovers, grey, wild whistling o'er the hill;
Shall he, nurst in the Peasant's lowly shed,
To hardy independence bravely bred,
By early Poverty to hardship steel'd,
And train'd to arms in stern Misfortune's field—
Shall he be guilty of their hireling crimes,
The servile, mercenary Swiss of rhymes?
Or labour hard the panegyric close,
With all the venal soul of dedicating Prose?
No! though his artless strains he rudely sings,
And throws his hand uncouthly o'er the strings,
He glows with all the spirit of the Bard,
Fame, honest fame, his great, his dear reward.
Still, if some Patron's generous care he trace,
Skilled in the secret, to bestow with grace;
When B——— befriends his humble name,
And hands the rustic stranger up to fame,

With heart-felt throes his grateful bosom swells,
The godlike bliss, to give alone excels.

. . . . . .

'Twas when the stacks get on their winter hap,
And thack and rape secure the toil-won crap:
Potatoe bings are snugged up frae skaith
Of coming Winter's biting, frosty breath;
The bees, rejoicing o'er their simmer toils,
Unnumber'd buds an' flowers' delicious spoils,
Seal'd up with frugal care in massive waxen piles,
Are doom'd by man, that tyrant o'er the weak,
The death o' devils, smoor'd wi' brimstone reek:
The thundering guns are heard on ev'ry side,
The wounded coveys, reeling, scatter wide;
The feather'd field-mates, bound by Nature's tie,
Sires, mothers, children, in one carnage lie:
(What warm, poetic heart, but inly bleeds,
And execrates man's savage, ruthless deeds)!
Nae mair the flow'r in field or meadow springs:
Nae mair the grove wi' airy concert rings,
Except, perhaps, the Robin's whistling glee,
Proud o' the height o' some bit half-lang tree:
The hoary morns precede the sunny days,
Mild, calm, serene, wide spreads the noontide blaze,
While thick the gossamour waves wanton in the rays.
'Twas in that season, when a simple bard,
Unknown and poor, simplicity's reward,
Ae night, within the ancient brugh of *Ayr*,
By whim inspired, or haply prest wi' care,
He left his bed, and took his wayward route,
And down by *Simpson's** wheel'd the left about:
(Whether impell'd by all-directing Fate
To witness what I after shall narrate;
Or whether rapt in meditation high,
He wander'd out he knew not where nor why),
The drowsy *Dungeon-clock*,† had number'd two,
And *Wallace tower*† had sworn the fact was true:
The tide-swoln Firth, with sullen-sounding roar,
Thro' the still night dash'd hoarse along the shore:
All else was hush'd as Nature's closed e'e;
The silent moon shone high o'er tow'r and tree:
The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream.

When, lo! on either hand the list'ning bard,
The clanging sough of whistling wings he heard;
Two dusky forms dart thro' the midnight air,
Swift as the *Gos*‡ drives on the wheeling hare;

* A noted tavern at the *Auld Brig* end.
† The two steeples.
‡ The gos-hawk, or falcon.

Ane on th' *Auld Brig* his airy shape uprears,
The ither flutters o'er the *rising piers*:
Our warlike Rhymer instantly descry'd
The Sprites that owre the *Brigs of Ayr* preside.
(That Bards are second-sighted is nae joke,
An' ken the lingo of the sp'ritual folk;
Fays, Spunkies, Kelpies, a' they can explain them,
And ev'n the vera deils they brawly ken them.)
Auld Brig appear'd of ancient Pictish race,
The very wrinkles Gothic in his face:
He seem'd as he wi' Time had warstl'd lang,
Yet toughly doure, he bade an unco bang.
New Brig was buskit in a braw new coat,
That he, at *Lon'on*, frae ane *Adams* got;
In's hand five taper staves as smooth's a bead,
Wi' virls and whirlygigums at the head.
The Goth was stalking round with anxious search,
Spying the time-worn flaws in every arch;
It chanc'd his new-come neebor took his e'e,
And e'en a vex'd an' angry heart had he!
Wi' thieveless sneer to see each modish mien,
He, down the water, gies him thus guide'en—

AULD BRIG.

I doubt na', frien', ye'll think ye're nae sheep-shank,
Ance ye were streekit o'er frae bank to bank!
But gin ye be a brig as auld as me,
Tho' faith that day I doubt ye'll never see;
There'll be, if that day come, I'll wad a boddle,
Some fewer whigmaleeries in your noddle.

NEW BRIG.

Auld Vandal, ye but show your little mense,
Just much about it wi' your scanty sense;
Will your poor narrow foot-path of a street,
Where twa wheel-barrows tremble when they meet,
Your ruin'd formless bulk, o' stane an' lime,
Compare wi' bonnie *Brigs* o' modern time?
There's men o' taste would tak' the *Ducat-stream*,*
Tho' they should cast the very sark and swim,
Ere they would grate their feelings wi' the view
Of sic an ugly Gothic hulk as you.

AULD BRIG.

Conceited gowk! puff'd up wi' windy pride!
This monie a year I've stood the flood an' tide;
An' tho' wi' crazy eild I'm sair forfairn,
I'll be a *Brig* when ye're a shapeless cairn!
As yet ye little ken about the matter,
But twa-three winters will inform ye better.
When heavy, dark, continued, a'-day rains,
Wi' deepening deluges o'erflow the plains;
When from the hills where springs the brawling *Coil*,
Or stately *Lugar's* mossy fountains boil,
Or where the *Greenock* winds his moorland course,
Or haunted *Garpal*† draws his feeble source,

* A noted ford, just above the Auld Brig.
† The banks of *Garpal Water* is one of the few places

Arous'd by blust'ring winds and spotting thowes,
In mony a torrent down his sna-broo rowes;
While crashing ice, borne on the roaring speat,
Sweeps dams, an' mills, an' brigs, a' to the gate;
And from *Glenbuck** down to the *Ratton key*,†
Auld *Ayr* is just one lengthen'd tumbling sea;
Then down ye'll hurl, deil nor ye never rise!
And dash the gumlie jaups up to the pouring skies,
A lesson sadly teaching, to your cost,
That Architecture's noble art is lost!

NEW BRIG.

Fine *Architecture*, trowth, I needs must say't o't!
The L—d be thankit that we've tint the gate o't!
Gaunt, ghastly, gaist-alluring edifices,
Hanging with threat'ning jut, like precipices;
O'er-arching, mouldy, gloom-inspiring coves,
Supporting roofs fantastic, stony groves;
Windows and doors, in nameless sculpture drest,
With order, symmetry, or taste unblest;
Forms like some bedlam statuary's dream,
The craz'd creations of misguided whim;
Forms might be worshipp'd on the bended knee,
And still the *second dread command* be free,
Their likeness is not found on earth, in air, or sea.
Mansions that would disgrace the building taste
Of any mason, reptile, bird, or beast;
Fit only for a doited Monkish race,
Or frosty maids forsworn the dear embrace,
Or cuifs of later times, wha held the notion
That sullen gloom was sterling true devotion;
Fancies that our guid Brugh denies protection,
And soon may they expire, unblest with resurrection!

AULD BRIG.

O ye, my dear-remember'd ancient yealings,
Were ye but here to share my wounded feelings!
Ye worthy *Proveses*, an' mony a *Bailie*,
Wha in the paths o' righteousness did toil aye;
Ye dainty *Deacons*, an ye douce *Conveners*,
To whom our moderns are but causey-cleaners;
Ye godly *Councils* wha hae blest this town;
Ye godly *Brethren* of the sacred gown,
Wha meekly gae your *hurdies* to the *smiters*;
And (what would now be strange) ye *godly Writers*:
A' ye douce folk I've borne aboon the broo,
Were ye but here, what would ye say or do!
How would your spirits groan in deep vexation,
To see each melancholy alteration;
And agonizing, curse the time and place
When ye begat the base, degenerate race!
Nae langer Rev'rend Men, their country's glory,
In plain braid Scots hold forth a plain braid story!
Nae langer thrifty Citizens, an' douce,
Meet owre a pint, or in the Council house:
But staumrel, corky-headed, graceless Gentry,
The herryment and ruin of the country;
Men, three parts made by tailors and by barbers,
Wha waste your well-hain'd gear on d——d *new Brigs* and *Harbours!*

NEW BRIG.

Now haud you there! for faith ye've said enough,
And muckle mair than ye can mak to through,
As for your Priesthood, I shall say but little,
Corbies and *Clergy* are a shot right kittle:
But, under favour o' your langer beard,
Abuse o' Magistrates might weel be spared:
To liken them to your auld warld squad,
I must needs say comparisons are odd.
In *Ayr*, Wag-wits nae mair can hae a handle
To mouth 'a Citizen,' a term o' scandal:
Nae mair the Council waddles down the street
In all the pomp of ignorant conceit;
Men wha grew wise priggin' owre hops an' raisins,
Or gather'd lib'ral views in Bonds and Seisins.
If haply Knowledge, on a random tramp,
Had shored them with a glimmer of his lamp,
And would to Common-sense, for once betrayed them,
Plain dull Stupidity stept kindly in to aid them.

. . . . . .

What farther clishmaclaver might been said,
What bloody wars, if Sprites had blood to shed,
No man can tell; but all before their sight,
A fairy train appear'd in order bright:
Adown the glitt'ring stream they featly danced:
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanced:
They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet:
While arts of Minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobling bards heroic ditties sung.
O had *M'Lauchlin*,* thairm-inspiring sage,
Been there to hear this heavenly band engage,
When thro' his dear *Strathspeys* they bore with Highland rage;
Or when they struck old Scotia's melting airs,
The lover's raptured joys or bleeding cares;
How would his Highland lug been nobler fir'd,
And even his matchless hand with finer touch inspir'd!

in the West of Scotland, where those fancy-scaring beings, known by the name of *Ghaists*, still continue pertinaciously to inhabit.

* The source of the river Ayr.

† A small landing-place above the large key.

* A well known performer of Scottish music on the violin.

No guess could tell what instrument appear'd,
But all the soul of Music's self was heard;
Harmonious concert rung in every part,
While simple melody pour'd moving on the heart.

The Genius of the stream in front appears,
A venerable chief advanced in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter tangle bound.
Next came the loveliest pair in all the ring,
Sweet Female Beauty hand in hand with Spring;
Then, crown'd with flow'ry hay, came Rural Joy,
And Summer, with his fervid-beaming eye:
All-cheering Plenty, with her flowing horn,
Led yellow Autumn wreath'd with nodding corn;
Then Winter's time-bleached locks did hoary show,
By Hospitality with cloudless brow;
Next follow'd Courage with his martial stride,
From where the *Feal* wild-woody coverts hide;
Benevolence, with mild benignant air,
A female form, came from the tow'rs of *Stair:*
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode
From simple *Catrine*, their long-lov'd abode:
Last, white-rob'd Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instruments of death:
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath.

THE ORDINATION.

For sense they little owe to Frugal Heav'n—
To please the Mob they hide the little giv'n.

I.

Kilmarnock Wabsters, fidge an' claw,
An' pour your creeshie nations;
An' ye wha leather rax an' draw,
Of a' denominations.
Swith to the *Laigh Kirk*, ane an' a',
An' there tak up your stations;
Then aff to *Begbie's* in a raw,
An' pour divine libations
For joy this day.

II.

Curst Common-sense, that imp o' hell,
Cam in wi' Maggie Lauder;*
But O——— aft made her yell,
An' R——— sair misca'd her;
This day, M'——— takes the flail,
An' he's the boy will blaud her!
He'll clap a *shangan* on her tail,
An' set the bairns to daud her
Wi' dirt this day.

III.

Mak haste an' turn king David owre,
An' lilt wi' holy clangor;
O' double verse come gie us four,
An' skirl up the Bangor:
This day the Kirk kicks up a stoure,
Nae mair the knaves shall wrang her,
For heresy is in her power,
And gloriously she'll whang her
Wi' pith this day.

IV.

Come let a proper text be read,
An' touch it aff wi' vigour,
How graceless *Ham** leugh at his Dad,
Which made *Canaan* a niger;
Or *Phineas*† drove the murdering blade,
Wi' whore-abhorring rigour;
Or *Zipporah*, ‡ the scaulding jade,
Was like a bluidy tiger
I' the inn that day.

V.

There, try his mettle on the creed,
An' bind him down wi' caution,
That *Stipend* is a carnal weed,
He taks but for the fashion;
An' gie him o'er the flock to feed,
An' punish each transgression;
Especial, *rams* that cross the breed,
Gie them sufficient threshin',
Spare them nae day.

VI.

Now auld Kilmarnock, cock thy tail,
An' toss thy horns fu' canty;
Nae mair thou'lt rowt out-owre the dale
Because thy pasture's scanty;
For lapfu's large o' *gospel kail*
Shall fill thy crib in plenty,
An' *runts o' grace*, the pick and wale,
No gi'en by way o' dainty,
But ilka day.

VII.

Nae mair by *Babel's streams* we'll weep,
To think upon our *Zion;*
An' hing our fiddles up to sleep,
Like baby-clouts a-dryin';
Come, screw the pegs wi' tunefu' cheep,
An' owre the thairms be tryin';
Oh, rare! to see our elbucks wheep,
An' a like lamb-tails flyin'
Fu' fast this day.

VIII.

Lang *Patronage*, wi' rod o' airn,
Has shored the Kirk's undoin',

* Alluding to a scoffing ballad which was made on the admission of the late Reverend and worthy Mr. L. to the Laigh Kirk.

* Genesis, ch. ix. ver. 22.
† Numbers, ch. xxv. ver. 8.
‡ Exodus, ch. iv. ver. 25.

As lately *Fenwick*, sair forfairn,
Has proven to its ruin:
Our Patron, honest man! *Glencairn*,
He saw mischief was brewin';
An' like a godly elect bairn,
He's wal'd us out a true ane,
An' sound this day.

IX.

Now R——— harangue nae mair,
But steek your gab for ever;
Or try the wicked town of Ayr,
For there they'll think you clever;
Or, nae reflection on your lear,
Ye may commence a shaver;
Or to the *Netherton* repair,
An' turn a carper weaver
Aff hand this day.

X.

M——— and you were just a match,
We never had sic twa drones;
Auld *Hornie* did the *Laigh Kirk* watch,
Just like a winkin' baudrons:
An' aye he catch'd the tither wretch,
To fry them in his caudrons:
But now his honour maun detach,
Wi' a' his brimstone squadrons,
Fast, fast, this day.

XI.

See, see auld Orthodoxy's faes,
She's swingein' through the city;
Hark how the nine-tail'd cat she plays!
I vow it's unco pretty:
There, Learning, wi' his Greekish face,
Grunts out some Latin ditty:
An' Common-sense is gaun, she says,
To mak to *Jamie Beattie*
Her plaint this day.

XII.

But there's Morality himsel',
Embracing a' opinions;
Hear, how he gies the tither yell,
Between his twa companions;
See, how she peels the skin an' fell,
As ane were peelin' onions!
Now there—they're packed aff to hell,
An' banish'd our dominions,
Henceforth this day.

XIII.

O happy day! rejoice, rejoice!
Come bouse about the porter!
Morality's demure decoys
Shall here nae mair find quarter:
M'———, R———, are the boys,
That heresy can torture:
They'll gie her on a rape a hoyse,
An' cowe her measure shorter
By the head some day.

XIV.

Come bring the tither mutchkin in,
An' here's for a conclusion,
To every *New Light* * mother's son,
From this time forth, Confusion:
If mair they deave us wi' their din,
Or Patronage intrusion,
We'll light a spunk, an' ev'ry skin,
We'll rin them aff in fusion
Like oil, some day.

THE CALF.

TO THE REV. MR. ——

On his Text, MALACHI, ch. iv. ver. 2. "And they shall go forth, and grow up, like CALVES of the stall."

RIGHT SIR! your text I'll prove it true,
Though Heretics may laugh;
For instance; there's yoursel' just now,
God knows, an unco *Calf!*

An' should some Patron be so kind,
As bless you wi' a kirk,
I doubt nae, Sir, but then we'll find,
Ye're still as great a *Stirk*.

But, if the Lover's raptur'd hour
Shall ever be your lot,
Forbid it, every heavenly Power,
You e'er should be a *Stot!*

Tho', when some kind, connubial Dear,
Your but-and-ben adorns,
The like has been that you may wear
A noble head of *horns*.

And in your lug, most reverend *James*,
To hear you roar and rowte,
Few men o' sense will doubt your claims
To rank amang the *nowte*.

And when ye're number'd wi' the dead,
Below a grassy hillock,
Wi' justice they may mark your head—
'Here lies a famous *Bullock!*'

ADDRESS TO THE DEIL.

O Prince! O Chief of many throned Power's,
That led th' embattled Seraphim to war.—*Milton.*

O THOU! whatever title suit thee,
Auld Hornie, Satan, Nick, or Clootie,
Wha in yon cavern grim an' sootie,
Clos'd under hatches,
Spairges about the brunstane cootie,
To scaud poor wretches!

Hear me, auld *Hangie*, for a wee,
An' let poor damned bodies be;

* *New Light* is a cant phrase in the West of Scotland, for those religious opinions which Dr. Taylor of Norwich has defended so strenuously.

I'm sure sma' pleasure it can gie,
E'en to a deil,
To skelp an' scaud poor dogs like me,
An' hear us squeel!

Great is thy pow'r, an' great thy fame;
Far kend and noted is thy name;
An' tho' yon lowin' heugh's thy hame,
Thou travels far;
An' faith! thou's neither lag nor lame,
Nor blate nor scaur.

Whyles, ranging like a roarin' lion,
For prey, a' holes and corners tryin';
Whyles on the strong-wing'd tempest flyin',
Tirling the kirks;
Whyles, in the human bosom pryin',
Unseen thou lurks.

I've heard my reverend *Graunie* say,
In lanely glens you like to stray;
Or where auld ruin'd castles gray,
Nod to the moon,
Ye fright the nightly wand'rer's way,
Wi' eldritch croon.

When twilight did my *Graunie* summon,
To say her prayers, douce honest woman!
Aft yont the dyke she's heard you bummin'!
Wi' eerie drone;
Or, rustlin', thro' the boortries comin',
Wi' heavy groan.

Ae dreary, windy, winter night,
The stars shot down wi' sklentin' light,
Wi' you, mysel', I gat a fright,
Ayont the lough;
Ye, like a rash-bush, stood in sight,
Wi' waving sough.

The cudgel in my nieve did shake,
Each bristl'd hair stood like a stake,
When wi' an eldritch stour, quaick—quaick—
Amang the springs,
Awa ye squatter'd, like a drake,
On whistling wings.

Let *Warlocks* grim, an' wither'd *hags*,
Tell how wi' you on ragweed nags,
They skim the muirs, and dizzy crags,
Wi' wicked speed;
And in kirk-yards renew their leagues,
Owre howkit dead.

Thence countra wives, wi' toil an' pain,
May plunge an' plunge the kirn in vain;
For, oh! the yellow treasure's ta'en
By witching skill;
An' dawtit, twal-pint *Hawkie*'s gane
As yell's the Bill.

Thence mystic knots mak great abuse,
On young Guidmen, fond, keen, an' crouse;
When the best wark-lume i' the house,
By cantrip wit,
Is instant made no worth a louse,
Just at the bit.

When thowes dissolve the snawy hoord,
An' float the jinglin' icy-boord,
Then *Water-kelpies* haunt the foord,
By your direction,
An' nighted Trav'llers are allured
To their destruction.

An' aft your moss-traversing *Spunkies*
Decoy the wight that late and drunk is;
The bleezin', curst, mischievous monkeys
Delude his eyes,
Till in some miry slough he sunk is,
Ne'er mair to rise.

When *Masons'* mystic *word* an' *grip*,
In storms an' tempests raise you up,
Some cock or cat your rage maun stop,
Or, strange to tell!
The youngest Brother ye wad whip
Aff straught to hell!

Lang syne, in *Eden's* bonnie yard,
When youthfu' lovers first were pair'd,
An' all the soul of love they shar'd,
The raptur'd hour,
Sweet on the fragrant flowery swaird
In shady bower:

Then you, ye auld, snic-drawing dog!
Ye came to Paradise *incog*,
An' played on man a cursed brogue,
(Black be your fa'!)
An' gied the infant world a shog,
'Maist ruined a'.

D'ye mind that day, when in a bizz,
Wi' reekit duds, and reestit gizz,
Ye did present your smoutie phiz
'Mang better folk,
An' sklented on the *man of Uz*
Your spitefu' joke?

An' how ye gat him i' your thrall,
An' brak him out o' house an' hall,
While scabs and blotches did him gall,
Wi' bitter claw,
An' lowsed his ill tongued wicked Scawl,
Was warst ava?

But a' your doings to rehearse,
Your wily snares an' fechtin' fierce,
Sin' that day *Michael* * did you pierce,
Down to this time,
Wad ding a Lallan tongue, or Erse,
In prose or rhyme.

An' now, auld *Cloots*, I ken ye're thinkin'
A certain Bardie's rantin', drinkin',
Some luckless hour will send him linkin',
To your black pit;

* Vide Milton, book vi.

But, faith! he'll turn a corner, jinkin',
And cheat you yet.

But, fare ye weel, auld *Nickie-ben!*
O wad ye tak a thought and men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still hae a stake—
I'm wae to think upon yon den,
Even for your sake!

THE

DEATH AND DYING WORDS

OF

POOR MAILIE,

THE AUTHOR'S ONLY PET YOWE.

AN UNCO MOURNFU' TALE.

As *Mailie*, an' her lambs thegither,
Were ae day nibbling on the tether,
Upon her cloot she coost a hitch,
An' owre she warsled in the ditch;
There, groaning, dying, she did lie,
When *Hughoc** he came doytin by.

Wi' glowrin' een, and lifted han's,
Poor *Hughoc* like a statue stan's:
He saw her days were near-hand ended,
But, wae's my heart! he could na mend it!
He gaped wide, but naething spak!
At length poor *Mailie* silence brak.

'O thou, whase lamentable face
Appears to mourn my waefu' case!
My *dying words* attentive hear,
An' bear them to my Master dear.

'Tell him, if e'er again he keep
As muckle gear as buy a sheep,
O, bid him never tie them mair
Wi' wicked strings o' hemp or hair!
But ca' them out to park or hill,
An' let them wander at their will:
So may his flock increase, an' grow
To scores o' lambs, an' packs o' woo'!

'Tell him, he was a master kin',
An' aye was guid to me an' mine:
An' now my dying charge I gie him,
My helpless lambs I trust them wi' him.

'O bid him save their harmless lives,
Frae dogs, an' tods, an' butchers' knives!
But gie them guid cow milk their fill,
Till they be fit to fend themsel';
An' tent them duly, e'en an' morn,
Wi' teats o' hay an' rips o' corn.

'An' may they never learn the gaets
Of ither vile, wanrestfu' *pets!*
To slink thro' slaps, an' reave an' steal,
At stacks o' pease, or stocks o' kail.
So may they, like their great forbears,
For mony a year come thro' the sheers:
So wives will gie them bits o' bread,
An' bairns greet for them when they're dead.

'My poor *toop-lamb*, my son an' heir,
O bid him breed him up wi' care!
An' if he live to be a beast,
To pit some havins in his breast!
An' warn him, what I winna name,
To stay content wi' yowes at hame;
An' no to rin an' wear his cloots,
Like ither menseless, graceless, brutes.

'An' neist my *yowie*, silly thing,
Guid keep thee frae a tether string!
O, may thou ne'er forgather up
Wi' ony blastit moorland toop:
But aye keep mind to moop an' mell
Wi' sheep o' credit like thysel'!

'An' now, my bairns, wi' my last breath,
I lea'e my blessin' wi' you baith:
An' when you think upo' your mither,
Mind to be kin' to ane anither.

'Now, honest *Hughoc*, dinna fail
To tell my master a' my tale;
An' bid him burn this cursed tether,
An', for thy pains, thou'se get my blether.'

This said, poor *Mailie* turn'd her head,
And closed her een amang the dead.

* A neebor herd-callan.

POOR MAILIE'S ELEGY.

LAMENT in rhyme, lament in prose,
Wi' saut tears trickling down your nose;
Our bardie's fate is at a close,
Past a' remead;
The last sad cape-stane o' his woes;
Poor Mailie's dead!

It's no the loss o' warl's gear,
That could sae bitter draw the tear,
Or mak our bardie, dowie, wear
The mourning weed:
He's lost a friend and neebor dear,
In *Mailie* dead.

Thro' a' the town she trotted by him;
A lang half-mile she could descry him;
Wi' kindly bleat, when she did spy him,
She ran wi' speed;
A friend mair faithfu' ne'er cam nigh him,
Than *Mailie* dead.

I wat she was a sheep o' sense,
An' could behave hersel' wi' mense:
I'll say't, she never brak a fence,
Thro' thievish greed.

Our bardie, lanely, keeps the spence
Sin' *Mailie's* dead.

Or, if he wanders up the howe,
Her living image in her *yowe*,
Comes bleating to him owre the knowe,
For bits o' bread;
An' down the briny pearls rowe
For *Mailie* dead.

She was nae get o' moorland tips,
Wi' tawted ket, an' hairy hips:
For her forbears were brought in ships
Frae yont the *Tweed!*
A bonnier *fleesh* ne'er cross'd the clips
Than *Mailie* dead.

Wae worth the man wha first did shape
That vile, wanchancie thing—*a rape!*
It maks guid fellows girn an' gape,
Wi' chokin' dread;
An' *Robin's* bonnet wave wi' crape,
For *Mailie* dead.

O, a' ye bards on bonnie *Doon!*
An' wha on *Ayr* your chaunters tune!
Come, join the melancholious croon
O' *Robin's* reed!
His heart will never get aboon
His *Mailie* dead.

TO J. S——.

Friendship! mysterious cement of the soul!
Sweet'ner of life, and solder of society!
I owe thee much!——*Blair.*

Dear S———, the sleest, paukie thief,
That e'er attempted stealth or rief,
Ye surely hae some warlock-breef
Owre human hearts;
For ne'er a bosom yet was prief
Against your arts.

For me, I swear by sun an' moon,
And every star that blinks aboon,
Ye've cost me twenty pair o' shoon,
Just gaun to see you:
And every ither pair that's done,
Mair taen I'm wi' you.

That auld capricious carlin, Nature,
To mak amends for scrimpit stature,
She's turn'd you aff, a human creature
On her *first* plan,
And in her freaks, on every feature,
She's wrote, *the Man.*

Just now I've taen the fit o' rhyme,
My barmie noddle's working prime,
My fancy yerkit up sublime
Wi' hasty summon;
Hae ye a leisure moment's time
To hear what's comin'?

Some rhyme a neebor's name to lash;
Some rhyme (vain thought!) for needfu' cash,
Some rhyme to court the countra clash,
An' raise a din;
For me an *aim* I never fash;
I rhyme for fun.

The star that rules my luckless lot,
Has fated me the russet coat,
An' damned my fortune to the groat:
But in requit,
Has bless'd me wi' a random shot
O' countra wit.

This while my notion's taen a sklent,
To try my fate in guid black *prent;*
But still the mair I'm that way bent,
Something cries 'Hoolie!
I red you, honest man, tak tent!
Ye'll shaw your folly.

'There's ither poets, much your betters,
Far seen in *Greek*, deep men o' letters,
Hae thought they had ensured their debtors.
A' future ages;
Now moths deform in shapeless tetters,
Their unknown pages.

Then farewee! hopes o' laurel-boughs,
To garland my poetic brows!
Henceforth I'll rove where busy ploughs
Are whistling thrang,
An' teach the lanely heights an' howes
My rustic sang.

I'll wander on, with tentless heed
How never-halting moments speed,
Till fate shall snap the brittle thread;
Then, all unknown,
I'll lay me with th' inglorious dead,
Forgot and gone!

But why o' death begin a tale?
Just now we're living, sound an' hale,
Then top and maintop crowd the sail,
Heave *care* o'er side
And large, before enjoyment's gale,
Let's tak' the tide.

This life, sae far's I understand,
Is a' enchanted fairy land,
Where pleasure is the magic wand,
That, wielded right,
Maks hours like minutes, hand, in hand,
Dance by fu' light.

The magic-wand then let us wield;
For ance that five-an'-forty's speel'd,
See crazy, weary, joyless eild,
Wi' wrinkled face,
Comes hostin', hirplin', owre the field,
Wi' creepin' pace.

When ance *life's day* draws near the gloamin',
Then fareweel vacant careless roamin';
An' fareweel cheerfu' tankards foamin',
An' social noise;
An' fareweel dear deluding *woman*,
The joy of joys!

O Life! how pleasant in thy morning,
Young Fancy's rays the hills adorning!
Cold-pausing Caution's lesson scorning,
We frisk away,
Like school-boys, at the expected warning,
To joy and play.

We wander there, we wander here,
We eye the rose upon the brier,
Unmindful that the thorn is near,
Amang the leaves:
And though the puny wound appear,
Short while it grieves.

Some, lucky, find a flowery spat,
For which they never toiled nor swat,
They drink the sweet and eat the fat,
But care or pain;
And haply eye the barren hut
With high disdain.

With steady aim, some Fortune chase;
Keen hope does every sinew brace:
Thro' fair, thro' foul, they urge the race,
An seize the prey:
Then cannie, in some cozie place,
They close the *day*.

An' others, like your humble servan',
Poor wights! nae rules nor roads observin';
To right or left, eternal swervin',
They zig-zag on;
Till curst wi' age, obscure an' starvin',
They aften groan.

Alas! what bitter toil an' straining—
But truce with peevish poor complaining!
Is Fortune's fickle *Luna* waning?
E'en let her gang!
Beneath what light she has remaining,
Let's sing our sang.

My pen I here fling to the door,
And kneel, 'Ye pow'rs!' and warm implore,
'Tho' I should wander *terra* o'er,
In all her climes,
Grant me but this, I ask no more,
Aye rowth o' rhymes.

'Gie dreeping roasts to countra lairds,
Till icicles hing frae their beards:
Gie fine braw claes to fine life-guards,
An' maids of honour;
An' yill an' whisky gie to cairds,
Until they sconner.

'A title, *Dempster* merits it;
A *garter* gie to *Willie Pitt*;
Gie wealth to some be-ledger'd cit,
In cent. per cent
But give me real, sterling wit,
An' I'm content.

'While ye are pleased to keep me hale
I'll sit down o'er my scanty meal,
Be't *water-brose* or *muslin-kail*,
Wi' cheerfu' face,
As lang's the muses dinna fail
To say the grace.'

An anxious e'e I never throws
Behint my lug, or by my nose;
I jouk beneath misfortune's blows,
As weel's I may:
Sworn foe to sorrow, care, an' prose,
I rhyme away.

O ye douce folk, that live by rule,
Grave, tideless-blooded, calm and cool,
Compar'd wi' you—O fool! fool! fool!
How much unlike!
Your hearts are just a standing pool,
Your lives, a dyke!

Nae hair-brain'd sentimental traces
In your unletter'd nameless faces;
In *arioso* trills and graces
Ye never stray,
But *gravissimo*, solemn basses
Ye hum away.

Ye are sae *grave*, nae doubt ye're *wise*,
Nae ferly tho' ye do despise
The hairum-scairum, ram-stam boys,
The rattlin' squad:
I see you upward cast your eyes—
—Ye ken the road.—

Whilst I—but I shall haud me there—
Wi' you I'll scarce gang *ony where*—
Then, *Jamie*, I shall say nae mair,
But quat my sang,
Content wi' *you* to mak a pair,
Whare'er I gang.

A DREAM.

Thoughts, words, and deeds, the statute blames with reason;
But surely *dreams* were ne'er indicted treason.

[On reading, in the public papers, the *Laureate's Ode*, with the other parade of June 4, 1786, the author was no sooner dropt asleep, than he imagined himself transported to the birth-day levee; and in his dreaming fancy, made the following *Address*.]

I.

GUID-MORNIN' to your *Majesty!*
May heaven augment your blisses,
On every new *birth-day* ye see,
A humble poet wishes!
My bardship here, at your levee,
On sic a day as this is,

Is sure an uncouth sight to see,
Amang the birth-day dresses
Sae fine this day.

II.

I see ye're complimented thrang,
By mony a lord an' lady,
'God save the King!' 's a cuckoo sang
That's unco easy said aye;
The *poets*, too, a venal gang,
Wi' rhymes weel turn'd an' ready,
Wad gar you trow ye ne'er do wrang,
But aye unerring steady,
On sic a day.

III.

For me! before a monarch's face,
Ev'n *there* I winna flatter;
For neither pension, post, nor place,
Am I your humble debtor:
So nae reflection on *your grace*,
Your kingship to bespatter;
There's monie waur been o' the race,
An' aiblins ane been better
Than you this day.

IV.

'Tis very true, my sov'reign king,
My skill may weel be doubted:
But facts are chiels that winna ding,
An' downa be disputed:
Your royal nest, beneath your wing,
Is e'en right reft an' clouted,
An' now the third part o' the string,
An' less, will gang about it
Than did ae day.

V.

Far be't frae me that I aspire
To blame your legislation,
Or say, ye wisdom want, or fire,
To rule this mighty nation!
But, faith! I muckle doubt, my *Sire*,
Ye've trusted ministration
To chaps, wha, in a barn or byre,
Wad better fill'd their station
Than courts yon day.

VI.

An' now ye've gien auld *Britain* peace,
Her broken shins to plaister;
Your sair taxation does her fleece,
Till she has scarce a tester;
For me, thank God, my life's a *lease*,
Nae *bargain* wearing faster,
Or, faith! I fear, that wi' the geese,
I shortly boost to pasture
I' the craft some day.

VII.

I'm no mistrusting *Willie Pitt*,
When taxes he enlarges,
(An' *Will's* a true guid fallow's get,
A name not envy spairges),
That he intends to pay your debt,
An' lessen a' your charges;
But, God-sake! let nae *saving fit*
Abridge your bonnie barges
An' boats this day.

VIII.

Adieu, my *Liege!* may freedom geck
Beneath your high protection;
An' may ye rax Corruption's neck,
An' gie her for dissection!
But since I'm here, I'll no neglect,
In loyal, true affection,
To pay your *Queen*, with due respect,
My fealty an' subjection
This great birth-day.

IX.

Hail, *Majesty! Most Excellent!*
While nobles strive to please ye,
Will ye accept a compliment
A simple poet gies ye?
Thae bonnie bairntime, Heav'n has lent,
Still higher may they heeze ye,
In bliss, till fate some day is sent,
For ever to release ye
Frae care that day.

X.

For you, young potentate o' Wales,
I tell your *Highness* fairly,
Down Pleasure's stream, wi' swelling sails,
I'm tauld ye're driving rarely;
But some day ye may gnaw your nails,
An' curse your folly sairly,
That e'er ye brak *Diana's* pales,
Or rattled dice wi' *Charlie*,
By night or day.

XI.

Yet aft a ragged *cowte*'s been known
To mak a noble *aiver*:
So, ye may doucely fill a throne,
For a' their clish-ma-claver:
There, him'* at *Agincourt* wha shone,
Few better were or braver;
An' yet wi' funny queer *Sir John*,†
He was an unco shaver
For monie a day

XII.

For you, right rev rend *Osnabrug*,
Nane sets the *lawn-sleeve* sweeter,
Altho' a ribbon at your lug
Wad been a dress completer:
As ye disown yon paughty dog
That bears the keys of Peter,
Then, swith! an' get a wife to hug,
Or, trouth, ye'll stain the mitre
Some luckless day.

XIII.

Young royal *Tarry Breeks*, I learn,
Ye've lately come athwart her;

* King Henry V.
† Sir John Falstaff, *vide* Shakespeare.

A glorious *galley** stem an stern,
Weel rigg'd for *Venus'* barter;
But first hang out, that she'll discern
Your hymeneal charter,
Then heave aboard your grapple airn,
An' large upo' her quarter,
Come full that day.

XIV.

Ye, lastly, bonnie blossoms a',
Ye royal lasses dainty,
Heav'n mak you guid as weel as braw,
An' gie you lads a-plenty:
But sneer nae *British boys* awa',
For kings are unco scant aye;
An' German gentles are but *sma'*,
They're better just than *want aye*
On onie day.

XV.

God bless you a'! consider now,
Ye're unco muckle dautet;
But, ere the *course* o' life be thro',
It may be bitter sautet;
An' I hae seen their *coggie* fou,
That yet hae tarrow't at it;
But or the *day* was done, I trow,
The laggen they hae clautet
Fu' clean that day.

THE VISION.

DUAN FIRST.†

The sun had closed the winter day,
The curlers quat their roaring play,
An' hunger'd maukin ta'en her way
To kail-yards green,
While faithless snaws ilk step betray
Whare she has been.

The thresher's weary *flingin-tree*
The lee-lang day had tired me:
And whan the day had closed his e'e,
Far i' the west,
Ben i' the *spence*, right pensivelie,
I gaed to rest.

There, lanely, by the ingle-cheek,
I sat and ey'd the spewing reek,
That fill'd wi' hoast-provoking smeek,
The auld clay biggin';
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin'.

All in this mottie, misty clime,
I backward mus'd on wasted time,
How I had spent my youthfu' prime,
An' done nae-thing.
But stringin' blethers up in rhyme
For fools to sing.

Had I to guid advice but harkit,
I might, by this, hae led a market,
Or strutted in a bank and clarkit
My cash account:
While here, half-mad, half-fed, half-sarkit,
Is a' th' amount.

I started, mutt'ring, blockhead! coof!
And heav'd on high my waukit loof,
To swear by a' yon starry roof,
Or some rash aith,
That I, henceforth, would be *rhyme-proof*
Till my last breath—

When click! the string the sneck did draw;
An' jee! the door gaed to the wa';
An' by my ingle-lowe I saw,
Now bleezin bright,
A tight outlandish *Hizzie* braw,
Come full in sight.

Ye need na doubt, I held my whisht
The infant aith half-form'd was crush't;
I glowr'd as eerie's I'd been dusht
In some wild glen;
When sweet, like modest worth, she blush't,
And stepped ben.

Green, slender, leaf-clad *holly-boughs*,
Were twisted gracefu' round her brows;
I took her for some *Scottish Muse*,
By that same token;
An' come to stop those reckless vows,
Would soon been broken.

A 'hair-brain'd, sentimental trace'
Was strongly marked in her face;
A wildly-witty, rustic grace
Shone full upon her;
Her eye, ev'n turn'd on empty space,
Beam'd keen with honour.

Down flow'd her robe, a tartan sheen,
Till half a leg was scrimply seen;
And such a leg! my bonnie *Jean*
Could only pear it;
Sae straught, sae taper, tight, and clean,
Nane else cam near it.

Her *mantle* large, of greenish hue,
My gazing wonder chiefly drew;
Deep *lights* and *shades*, bold-mingling, threw
A lustre grand;
And seem'd to my astonish'd view,
A *well known* land.

Here, rivers in the sea were lost:
There, mountains to the skies were tost:
Here, tumbling billows mark'd the coast,
With surging foam;
There, distant shone Art's lofty boast,
The lordly dome.

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* Alluding to the newspaper account of a certain royal sailor's amour.

† *Duan*, a term of Ossian's for the different divisions of a digressive poem. See his *Cath-Loda*, vol. ii. of M'Pherson's translation.

Here *Doon* pour'd down his far-fetch'd floods;
There, well-fed *Irwine* stately thuds:
Auld hermit *Ayr* staw thro' his woods,
On to the shore;
And many a lesser torrent scuds,
With seeming roar.

Low, in a sandy valley spread,
An ancient *borough* rear'd her head;
Still, as in Scottish story read,
She boasts a race,
To every nobler virtue bred,
And polish'd grace.

By stately tow'r or palace fair,
Or ruins pendent in the air,
Bold stems of heroes, here and there,
I could discern;
Some seem'd to muse, some seem'd to dare,
With feature stern.

My heart did glowing transport feel,
To see a race * heroic wheel,
And brandish round the deep-dy'd steel
In sturdy blows;
While back-recoiling seem'd to reel
Their suthron foes.

His COUNTRY'S SAVIOUR,† mark him well!
Bold *Richardton's* ‡ heroic swell;
The chief on *Sark* § who glorious fell,
In high command;
And *he* whom ruthless fates expel
His native land.

There, where a sceptred *Pictish* shade ‖
Stalk'd round his ashes lowly laid,
I mark'd a martial race pourtray'd
In colours strong;
Bold, soldier-featur'd, undismay'd
They strode along.

Thro' many a wild, romantic grove, ¶
Near many a hermit-fancy'd cove,
(Fit haunts for friendship or for love
In musing mood),
An *aged Judge*, I saw him rove,
Dispensing good.

With deep-struck reverential awe, **
The learned *sire* and *son* I saw,
To Nature's God and Nature's law
They gave their lore,
This, all its source and end to draw,
That, to adore.

Brydon's brave ward * I well could spy,
Beneath old *Scotia's* smiling eye;
Who call'd on Fame, low standing by,
To hand him on,
Where many a patriot-name on high,
And hero shone.

DUAN SECOND.

WITH musing-deep, astonish'd stare,
I view'd the heav'nly-seeming *fair*;
A whisp'ring throb did witness bear,
Of kindred sweet,
When with an elder sister's air
She did me greet.

'All hail! my own inspired bard!
In me thy native muse regard;
Nor longer mourn thy fate is hard,
Thus poorly low,
I come to give thee such reward
As we bestow.

'Know, the great *genius* of this land
Has many a light, aerial band,
Who, all beneath his high command,
Harmoniously,
As arts or arms they understand,
Their labours ply.

'They *Scotia's* race among them share;
Some fire the soldier on to dare;
Some rouse the patriot up to bare
Corruption's heart:
Some teach the bard, a darling care,
The tuneful art.

'Mong swelling floods of reeking gore,
They, ardent, kindling spirits pour;
Or, 'mid the venal senate's roar,
They, sightless, stand,
To mend the honest patriot-lore,
And grace the hand.

'And when the bard, or hoary sage,
Charm or instruct the future age,
They bind the wild poetic rage
In energy,
Or point the inconclusive page
Full on the eye.

'Hence *Fullarton*, the brave and young;
Hence *Dempster's* zeal-inspired tongue;
Hence sweet harmonious *Beattie* sung
His "Minstrel lays;"
Or tore, with noble ardour stung,
The *sceptic's* bays.

'To lower orders are assign'd
The humbler ranks of human-kind,

* The Wallaces. † William Wallace.
‡ Adam Wallace, of Richardton, cousin to the immortal preserver of Scottish independence.
§ Wallace, Laird of Craigie, who was second in command, under Douglas Earl of Ormond, at the famous battle on the banks of Sark, fought *anno* 1448. That glorious victory was principally owing to the judicious conduct and intrepid valour of the gallant Laird of Craigie, who died of his wounds after the action.
‖ Coilus, King of the Picts, from whom the district of Kyle is said to take its name, lies buried, as tradition says, near the family-seat of the Montgomeries of Coilsfield, where his burial-place is still shown.
¶ Barskimming, the seat of the late Lord Justice-Clerk.
** Catrine, the seat of the late Doctor, and present Professor Stewart.

* Colonel Fullarton.

The rustic Bard, the lab'ring Hind,
The Artisan;
All choose, as various they're inclin'd,
The various man.

'When yellow waves the heavy grain,
The threat'ning storm some strongly rein;
Some teach to meliorate the plain,
With tillage skill;
And some instruct the shepherd-train,
Blithe o'er the hill.

'Some hint the lover's harmless wile;
Some grace the maiden's artless smile;
Some soothe the lab'rer's weary toil,
For humble gains,
And make his cottage scenes beguile
His cares and pains.

'Some bounded to a district-space,
Explore at large man's infant race,
To mark the embryotic trace
Of *rustic Bard;*
And careful note each op'ning grace,
A guide and guard.

'*Of these am I—Coila* my name;
And this district as mine I claim,
Where once the *Campbells*, chiefs of fame,
Held ruling pow'r:
I mark'd thy embryo tuneful flame,
Thy natal hour.

'With future hope, I oft would gaze,
Fond on thy little early ways,
Thy rudely caroll'd, chiming phrase,
In uncouth rhymes,
Fired at the simple, artless lays
Of other times.

'I saw thee seek the sounding shore,
Delighted with the dashing roar;
Or when the north his fleecy store
Drove thro' the sky,
I saw grim Nature's visage hoar
Struck thy young eye.

'Or when the deep-green mantled earth
Warm cherish'd ev'ry flow'ret's birth,
And joy and music pouring forth
In ev'ry grove,
I saw thee eye the general mirth
With boundless love.

'When ripen'd fields, and azure skies,
Call'd forth the reaper's rustling noise,
I saw thee leave their ev'ning joys,
And lonely stalk,
To vent thy bosom's swelling rise
In pensive walk.

'When youthful love, warm-blushing, strong,
Keen-shivering shot thy nerves along,
Those accents, grateful to thy tongue,
Th' adored *Name*,
I taught thee how to pour in song,
To soothe thy flame.

'I saw thy pulse's maddening play,
Wild send thee Pleasure's devious way,
Misled by Fancy's meteor ray,
By Passion driven;
But yet the *light* that led astray
Was *light* from heaven.

'I taught thy manners-painting strains,
The loves, the ways of simple swains
Till now, o'er all my wide domains
Thy fame extends;
And some, the pride of *Coila's* plains,
Become thy friends.

'Thou canst not learn, nor can I show,
To paint with *Thomson's* landscape glow;
Or wake the bosom-melting throe,
With *Shenstone's* art;
Or pour, with *Gray*, the moving flow
Warm on the heart.

'Yet all beneath th' unrivall'd rose,
The lowly daisy sweetly blows:
Tho' large the forest's monarch throws
His army shade,
Yet green the juicy hawthorn grows,
Adown the glade.

'Then never murmur nor repine;
Strive in thy humble sphere to shine;
And trust me, not *Potosi's* mine,
Nor king's regard,
Can give a bliss o'ermatching thine,
A *rustic Bard.*

'To give my counsels all in one,
Thy tuneful flame still careful fan;
Preserve *the dignity of Man*,
With soul erect;
And trust *the Universal plan*
Will all protect.

'*And wear thou this*,'—she solemn said,
And bound the *Holly* round my head;
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away.

ADDRESS TO THE UNCO GUID

OR THE

RIGIDLY RIGHTEOUS.

My son, these maxims make a rule,
And lump them aye thegither;
The *Rigid Righteous* is a fool,
The *Rigid Wise* anither:

The eleanest corn that e'er was dight
May hae some pyles o' caff in;
Sae ne'er a fellow-ereature slight
For random fits o' daffin.—
Solomon.—Eccles. ch. vii. ver. 16.

I.

O ye wha are sae guid yoursel,
Sae pious an' sae holy,
Ye've nought to do but mark and tell
Your neebour's fauts and folly!
Whase life is like a weel gaun mill,
Supply'd wi' store o' water,
The heapit happer's ebbing still,
And still the clap plays clatter.

II.

Hear me, ye venerable core,
As counsel for poor mortals,
That frequent pass douce Wisdom's door
For glaikit Folly's portals;
I, for their thoughtless, careless sakes,
Would here propone defences,
Their donsie tricks, their black mistakes,
Their failings and mischances.

III.

Ye see your state wi' theirs compared,
An' shudder at the niffer,
But cast a moment's fair regard,
What maks the mighty differ?
Discount what scant occasion gave,
That purity ye pride in,
An' (what's aft mair than a' the lave)
Your better art o' hiding.

IV.

Think, when your castigated pulse
Gies now and then a wallop,
What ragings must his veins convulse,
That still eternal gallop:
Wi' wind and tide fair i' your tail,
Right on ye scud your sea-way;
But in the teeth o' baith to sail,
It maks an unco lee-way.

V.

See social life and glee sit down,
All joyous and unthinking,
Till, quite transmogrified, they're grown
Debauchery and drinking:
O would they stay to calculate
Th' eternal consequences;
Or your more dreaded hell to state,
Damnation of expenses!

VI.

Ye high, exalted, virtuous dames,
Ty'd up in godly laces,
Before ye gie poor *frailty* names,
Suppose a change o' cases;
A dear lov'd lad, convenience snug,
A treacherous inclination—
But, let me whisper i' your lug,
Ye're aiblins nae temptation.

VII.

Then gently scan your brother man,
Still gentler sister woman;
Tho' they may gang a kennin wrang,
To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark,
The moving *why* they do it;
And just as lamely can ye mark,
How far perhaps they rue it.

VIII.

Who made the heart, 'tis *He* alone
Decidedly can try us,
He knows each chord—its various tone,
Each spring—its various bias:
Then at the balance let's be mute,
We never can adjust it;
What's *done* we partly may compute,
But know not what's *resisted.*

TAM SAMSON'S* ELEGY.

An honest man's the noblest work of God.—*Pope.*

Has auld K———— seen the Deil!
Or great M'————† thrawn his heel?
Or R————‡ again grown weel
To preach an' read?
'Na, waur than a'!' cries ilka chiel,
'*Tam Samson's* dead!

K———— lang may grunt an' grane,
An' sigh, an' sab, an' greet her lane,
An' cleed her bairns, man, wife, and wean,
In mourning weed;
To death, she's dearly paid the kane,
Tam Samson's dead

The brethren of the mystic *level*,
May hing their head in woefu' bevel,
While by their nose the tears will revel,
Like ony bead!
Death's gien the lodge an unco devel,
Tam Samson's dead!

When winter muffles up his cloak,
And binds the mire like a rock;
When to the lochs the curlers flock,
Wi' gleesome speed;
Wha will they station at the *cock?*
Tam Samson's dead!

He was the king o' a' the core,
To guard, or draw, or wick a bore,

* When this worthy old sportsman went out last muirfowl season, he supposed it was to be, in Ossian's phrase, 'the last of his fields!' and expressed an ardent wish to die and be buried in the muirs. On this hint the author composed his elegy and epitaph.

† A certain preacher, a great favourite with the million. *Vide* the Ordination, Stanza II.

‡ Another preacher, an equal favourite with the few, who was at that time ailing. For him see also the Ordination, Stanza IX.

Or up the rink, like *Jehu* roar,
In time o' need;
But now he lags on death's *hog-score*,
Tam Samson's dead!

Now safe the stately sawmont sail,
And trouts bedropp'd wi' crimson hail,
And eels weel kenn'd for souple tail,
And geds for greed,
Since dark in death's *fish-creel* we wail,
Tam Samson dead!

Rejoice, ye birring paitricks a';
Ye cootie moorcocks, crousely craw;
Ye maukins, cock your fud fu' braw,
Withouten dread;
Your mortal fae is now awa',
Tam Samson's dead.

That waefu' morn be ever mourn'd,
Saw him in shootin' graith adorn'd,
While pointers round impatient burn'd,
Frae couples freed!
But, och! he gaed and ne'er return'd!
Tam Samson's dead!

In vain auld age his body batters;
In vain the gout his ancles fetters;
In vain the burns came down like waters,
An acre braid!
Now ev'ry auld wife, greetin', clatters,
Tam Samson's dead!

Owre mony a weary hag he limpit,
An' aye the tither shot he thumpit,
Till coward death behind him jumpit,
Wi' deadly feide;
Now he proclaims wi' tout o' trumpet,
Tam Samson's dead!

When at his heart he felt the dagger,
He reel'd his wonted bottle-swagger,
But yet he drew the mortal trigger
Wi' weel-aim'd heed;
'L—d, five!' he cry'd, an' owre did stagger;
Tam Samson's dead!

Ilk hoary hunter mourn'd a brither;
Ilk sportsman youth bemoan'd a father;
Yon auld grey stane, amang the heather,
Marks out his head,
Whare *Burns* has wrote, in rhyming blether,
Tam Samson's dead!

There low he lies, in lasting rest:
Perhaps upon his mould'ring breast
Some spitefu' muirfowl bigs her nest,
To hatch an' breed;
Alas! nae mair he'll them molest!
Tam Samson's dead!

When August winds the heather wave,
And sportsmen wander by yon grave,
Three volleys let his mem'ry crave
O' pouther an' lead,
Till Echo answer frae her cave,
Tam Samson's dead!

Heav'n rest his saul, whare'er he be!
Is th' wish o' mony mae than me:
He had twa fauts, or may be three,
Yet what remead?
Ae social, honest man, want we:
Tam Samson's dead!

THE EPITAPH.

Tam Samson's weel-worn clay here lies,
Ye canting zealots, spare him!
If honest worth in heaven rise,
Ye'll mend or ye won near him.

PER CONTRA.

Go, Fame, and canter like a filly
Thro' a' the streets an' neuks o' *Killie*,*
Tell every social, honest billie,
To cease his grievin',
For yet unskaith'd by death's gleg gullie,
Tam Samson's livin'.

HALLOWEEN. †

[The following poem will, by many readers, be well enough understood; but for the sake of those who are unacquainted with the manners and traditions of the country where the scene is cast, notes are added, to give some account of the principal charms and spells of that night, so big with prophecy to the peasantry in the West of Scotland. The passion of prying into futurity makes a striking part of the history of human nature in its rude state, in all ages and nations; and it may be some entertainment to a philosophic mind, if any such should honour the author with a perusal, to see the remains of it among the more unenlightened in our own.]

Yes! let the rich deride, the proud disdain,
The simple pleasures of the lowly train;
To me more dear, congenial to my heart,
One native charm, than all the gloss of art.
Goldsmith.

I.

Upon that night, when fairies light,
On *Cassilis Downans* ‡ dance,
Or owre the lays, in splendid blaze,
On sprightly coursers prance;
Or for *Colean* the route is ta'en,
Beneath the moon's pale beams!

* *Killie* is a phrase the country folks sometimes use for Kilmarnock.

† Is thought to be a night when witches, devils, and other mischief-making beings, are all abroad on their baneful midnight errands; particularly those aerial people, the Fairies, are said on that night to hold a grand anniversary.

‡ Certain little romantic, rocky, green hills, in the neighbourhood of the ancient seat of the Earls of Cassilis.

There, up the *cove*,* to stray an' rove
Amang the rocks and streams,
To sport that night

II.

Amang the bonnie winding banks
Where *Doon* rins, wimplin', clear,
Where BRUCE† ance rul'd the martial ranks,
An' shook his *Carrick* spear,
Some merry, friendly, countra folks,
Together did convene,
To *burn* their nits, an' *pou* their stocks,
An' haud their *Hallowe'en*
Fu' blithe that night.

III.

The lasses feat, an' cleanly neat,
Mair braw than when their fine;
Their faces blithe, fu' sweetly kythe,
Hearts leal, an' warm, an' kin':
The lads sae trig, wi' wooer-babs,
Weel knotted on their garten,
Some unco blate, an' some wi' gabs,
Gar lasses' hearts gang startin'
Whyles fast at night.

IV.

Then first and foremost, thro' the kail,
Their *stocks*‡ maun a' be sought ance;
They steek their een, an' graip an' wale,
For muckle anes and straught anes.
Poor hav'rel Will fell aff the drift,
An' wander'd thro' the *bow-kail*,
An' pou't, for want o' better shift,
A *runt* was like a sow-tail,
Sae bow't that night.

V.

Then, straught or crooked, yird or nane,
They roar an' cry a' throu'ther;
The vera wee things, todlin', rin
Wi' stocks out-owre their shouther;
An' gif the *custoc*'s sweet or sour,
Wi' joctelegs they taste them;
Syne coziely, aboon the door,
Wi' cannie care, they've plac'd them
To lie that night.

VI.

The lasses staw frae 'mang them a'
To pou their *stalks* o' *corn*;*
But Rab slips out, and jinks about,
Behint the muckle thorn:
He grippet Nelly hard an' fast;
Loud skirl'd a' the lasses;
But her *tap-pickle* maist was lost,
When kiuttlin' in the fause-house†
Wi' him that night.

VII.

The auld guidwife's weel-hoordet *nits*‡
Are round an' round divided,
An' monie lads and lasses' fates,
Are there that night decided:
Some kindle, couthy, side by side,
An' burn thegither trimly;
Some start awa' wi' saucy pride,
An' jump out-owre the chimlie
Fu' high that night.

VIII.

Jean slips in twa wi' tentie e'e;
Wha 'twas, she wadna tell;
But this is *Jock*, an' this is *me*,
She says in to hersel':
He bleez'd owre her, and she owre him,
As they wad never mair part;
Till fuff! he started up the lum,
An' Jean had e'en a sair heart
To see't that night.

IX.

Poor Willie, wi' his *bow-kail runt*,
Was *brunt* wi' primsie Mallie;
An' Mallie, nae doubt, took the drunt,
To be compar'd to Willie:
Mall's nit lap out wi' pridefu' fling,
An' her ain fit it brunt it;
While Willie lap, and swoor by *jing*,
'Twas just the way he wanted
To be that night.

X.

Nell had the fause-house in her min',
She pits hersel' an' Rob in;
In loving bleeze they sweetly join,
Till white in ase they're sobbin':
Nell's heart was dancin' at the view,
She whisper'd Rob to look for't:

* A noted cavern near Colean-house, called The Cove of Colean; which, as Cassilis Downans, is famed in country story for being a favourite haunt for fairies.

† The famous family of that name, the ancestors of ROBERT, the great deliverer of his country, were Earls of Carrick.

‡ The first ceremony of Hallowe'en, is pulling each a *stock*, or plant of kail. They must go out, hand in hand, with eyes shut, and pull the first they meet with! Its being big or little, straight, or crooked, is prophetic of the size and shape of the grand object of all their spells—the husband or wife. If any *yird*, or earth, stick to the root, that is *tocher*, or fortune; and the taste of the *custoc*, that is the heart of the stem, is indicative of the natural temper and disposition.—Lastly, the stems, or, to give them their ordinary appellation, the *runts*, are placed somewhere above the head of the door; and the Christian names of the people whom chance brings into the house, are, according to the priority of placing the *runts*, the names in question.

* They go to the barn-yard, and pull each, at three several times, a stalk of oats. If the third stalk wants the *top-pickle*, that is, the grain at the top of the stalk, the party in question will come to the marriage-bed any thing but a maid.

† When the corn is in a doubtful state, by being too green, or wet, the stack-builder, by means of old timber, &c. makes a large apartment in his stack, with an opening in the side which is fairest exposed to the wind; this he calls a *fause-house*.

‡ Burning the nuts is a favourite charm. They name the lad and lass to each particular nut, as they lay them in the fire, and accordingly as they burn quietly together, or start from beside one another, the course and issue of the courtship will be.

Rob, stowlins, prie'd her bonnie mou,
Fu' cozie in the neuk for't,
Unseen that night.

XI.

But Merran sat behint their backs,
Her thoughts on Andrew Bell;
She lea'es them gashin' at their cracks,
And slips out by hersel':
She thro' the yard the nearest taks,
An' to the kiln she goes then,
An' darklins graipit for the bauks,
And in the *blue clue** throws then,
Right fear't that night.

XII.

An' aye she win't, an' aye she swat,
I wat she made nae jaukin;
Till something held within the pat,
Guid L—d! but she was quakin'!
But whether 'twas the Deil himsel',
Or whether 'twas a bauk-en,
Or whether it was Andrew Bell,
She did na wait on talkin'
To spear that night.

XIII.

Wee Jenny to her Graunie says,
"Will ye go wi' me, graunie?
I'll *eat the apple*† *at the glass*,
I gat frae uncle Johnie:"
She fuff't her pipe wi' sic a lunt,
In wrath she was sae vap'rin',
She notic't na, an aizle brunt
Her braw new worset apron
Out thro' that night.

XIV.

"Ye little skelpie-limmer's face!
How daur ye try sic sportin',
As seek the foul Thief ony place,
For him to spae your fortune:
Nae doubt but ye may get a *sight!*
Great cause ye hae to fear it;
For monie a ane has gotten a fright,
An' liv'd an' di'd deleeret
On sic a night.

XV.

"Ae hairst afore the Sherra-moor,
I mind 't as weel's yestreen,
I was a gilpey then, I'm sure
I was na past fyfteen:
The simmer had been cauld an' wat,
An' stuff was unco green;
An' aye a rantin kirn we gat,
An' just on *Hallowcen*
It fell that night.

XVI.

"Our stibble-rig was Rab M'Graen,
A clever, sturdy fallow;
He's sin gat Eppie Sim wi' wean,
That liv'd in Achmacalla:
He gat *hemp-seed*,* I mind it weel,
An' he made unco light o't;
But mony a day was *by himsel'*,
He was sae sairly frighted
That vera night.'

XVII.

Than up gat fechtin' Jamie Fleck,
An' he swoor by his conscience,
That he could *saw hemp-seed* a peck;
For it was a' but nonsense!
The auld guid-man raught down the pock,
An' out a handfu' gied him;
Syne bad him slip frae 'mang the folk,
Sometime when nae ane see'd him,
An' try't that night.

XVIII.

He marches thro' amang the stacks,
Tho' he was something sturtin,
The *graip* he for a *harrow* taks,
An' haurls at his curpin:
An' ev'ry now an' then he says,
"Hemp-seed I saw thee,
An' her that is to be my lass,
Come after me, and draw thee,
As fast this night."

XIX.

He whistl'd up Lord Lennox' march,
To keep his courage cheery;
Altho' his hair began to arch,
He was sae fley'd an' eerie:
Till presently he hears a squeak,
An' then a grane an' gruntle;
He by his shouther gae a keek,
An' tumbl'd wi' a wintle
Out-owre that night.

XX.

He roar'd a horrid murder shout,
In dreadfu' desperation!
An' young an' auld cam rinnin' out,
To hear the sad narration:

* Whoever would, with success, try this spell, must strictly observe these directions: Steal out, all alone, to the *kiln*, and, darkling, throw into the *pot* a clue of blue yarn; wind it in a new clue off the old one: and, towards the latter end, something will hold the thread, demand *wha hauds?* i. e. who holds? an answer will be returned from the kiln-pot, by naming the Christian and surname of your future spouse.

† Take a candle, and go alone to a looking-glass; eat an apple before it, and some traditions say, you should comb your hair all the time; the face of your conjugal companion, *to be*, will be seen in the glass, as if peeping over your shoulder.

* Steal out unperceived, and sow a handful of hemp-seed; harrowing it with any thing you can conveniently draw after you. Repeat now and then, 'Hemp-seed I saw thee: hemp-seed I saw thee; and him (or her) that is to be my true-love, come after me and pou thee.' Look over your left shoulder, and you will see the appearance of the person invoked, in the attitude of pulling hemp. Some traditions say, 'come after me, and shaw thee,' that is, show thyself: in which case it simply appears. Others omit the harrowing, and say, 'come after me, and harrow thee.'

He swoor 'twas hilchin Jean M'Craw,
Or crouchie Merran Humphie,
Till stop! she trotted thro' them a';
An' wha was it but *Grumphie*
Asteer that night!

XXI.

Meg fain wad to the *barn* hae gane,
To *win three wechts o' naething*;*
But for to meet the deil her lane,
She pat but little faith in:
She gies the herd a pickle nits,
An' twa red cheekit apples,
To watch, while for the *barn* she sets,
In hopes to see Tam Kipples
That vera night.

XXII.

She turns the key wi' cannie thraw,
An' owre the threshold ventures;
But first on Sawnie gies a ca',
Syne bauldly in she enters;
A *ratton* rattled up the wa',
An' she cry'd, L—d preserve her!
An' ran thro' midden-hole an' a',
An' pray'd wi' zeal and fervour,
Fu' fast that night.

XXIII.

They hoy't out Will, wi' sair advice;
Then hecht him some fine braw ane;
It chanc'd the *stack* he *faddom'd thrice*,†
Was timmer-propt for thrawin';
He taks a swirlie auld moss-oak,
For some black, grousome carlin;
An' loot a wince, an' drew a stroke,
Till skin in blypes cam haurlin'
Aff's nieves that night.

XXIV.

A wanton widow Leezie was,
As canty as a kittlen;
But Och! that night, amang the shaws,
She got a fearfu' settlin'!
She thro' the whins, an' by the cairn,
An' owre the hill gaed scrievin',
Whare *three lairds' lands met at a burn*,‡
To dip her left sark-sleeve in,
Was bent that night.

XXV.

Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As thro' the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round a rocky scar it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering, dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Below the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

XXVI.

Amang the brackens, on the brae,
Between her an' the moon,
The deil, or else an outler quey,
Gat up an' gae a croon:
Poor Leezie's heart maist lap the hool;
Ne'er lavrock-height she jumpit,
But mist a fit, an' in the *pool*
Out-owre the lugs she plumpit,
Wi' a plunge that night.

XXVII.

In order, on the clean hearth-stane,
The *luggies* three* are ranged,
And ev'ry time great care is ta'en,
To see them duly changed:
Auld uncle John, wha wedlock's joys
Sin' *Mar's-year* did desire,
Because he gat the toom-dish thrice,
He heav'd them on the fire,
In wrath that night.

XXVIII.

Wi' merry sangs, an' friendly cracks,
I wat they did na weary;
An' unco tales, and funnie jokes,
Their sports were cheap an' cheery:
Till *butter'd so'ns*,† wi' fragrant lunt,
Set a' their gabs a-steerin';
Syne, wi' a social glass o' strunt,
They parted aff careerin'
Fu' blithe that night.

---

* This charm must likewise be performed unperceived, and alone. You go to the *barn*, and open both doors, taking them off the hinges, if possible; for there is danger, that the *being* about to appear, may shut the doors, and do you some mischief. Then take that instrument used in winnowing the corn, which, in our country dialect, we call a *wecht*, and go through all the attitudes of letting down corn against the wind. Repeat it three times; and the third time an apparition will pass through the barn, in at the windy door, and out at the other, having both the figure in question, and the appearance or retinue, marking the employment, or station in life.

† Take an opportunity of going, unnoticed, to a *Bear-stack*, and fathom it three times round. The last fathom of the last time you will catch in your arms the appearance of your future conjugal yokefellow.

‡ You go out, one or more, for this is a social spell, to a south running spring or rivulet, where 'three lairds' lands meet,' and dip your left shirt sleeve. Go to bed in sight of a fire, and hang your wet sleeve before it to dry. Lie awake; and some time near midnight, an apparition, having the exact figure of the grand object in question, will come and turn the sleeve as if to dry the other side of it.

* Take three dishes, put clean water in one, foul water in another, leave the third empty; blindfold a person, and lead him to the hearth where the dishes are ranged: he (or she) dips the left hand; if by chance in the clean water, the future husband or wife will come to the bar of matrimony a maid; if in the foul, a widow; if in the empty dish, it foretells, with equal certainty, no marriage at all. It is repeated three times, and every time the arrangement of the dishes is altered.

† Sowens, with butter instead of milk to them, is always the *Halloween Supper*.

THE

AULD FARMER'S

NEW-YEAR MORNING SALUTATION TO HIS

AULD MARE MAGGIE,

ON GIVING HER THE ACCUSTOMED RIPP OF CORN TO HANSEL IN THE NEW YEAR.

A *Guid New-Year* I wish thee, Maggie!
Hae, there's a *ripp* to thy auld baggie:
Tho' thou's howe-backit, now, an' knaggie,
I'vn seen the day,
Thou could hae gaen like onie staggie
Out-owre the lay.

Tho' now thou's dowie, stiff, an' crazy,
An' thy auld hide's as white's a daisy,
I've seen thee dappl't, sleek, an' glaizie,
A bonnie gray:
He should been tight that daur't to *raize* thee,
Ance in a day.

Thou ance was i' the foremost rank,
A *filly* buirdly, steeve, an' swank,
An' set weel down a shapely shank
As e'er tred yird;
An' could hae flown out-owre a stank,
Like onie bird.

It's now some nine-an'-twenty year,
Sin' thou was my guid father's *meere;*
He gied me thee, o' tocher clear,
An' fifty mark;
Tho' it was sma', 'twas weel-won gear,
An' thou was stark.

When first I gaed to woo my *Jenny*,
Ye then was trottin' wi' your minnie:
Tho' ye was trickie, slee, an' funnie,
Ye ne'er was donsie,
But hamely, tawie, quiet, an' cannie,
An' unco sonsie.

That day, ye pranc'd wi' muckle pride,
When ye bure hame my bonnie *bride:*
An' sweet an' gracefu' she did ride,
Wi' maiden air!
Kyle Stewart I could bragged wide,
For sic a pair.

Tho' now ye dow but hoyte an' hobble,
An' wintle like a samount-coble,
That day ye was a jinker noble,
Fer heels an' win'!
An' ran them till they a' did wauble,
Far, far behin'.

When thou an' I were young and skeigh,
An' stable-meals at fairs were dreigh,
How thou wad prance, an' snore, an' skreigh,
An' tak the road!
Town's bodies ran, an' stood abeigh,
An' ca't thee mad.

When thou was corn't, an' I was mellow,
We took the road aye like a swallow:
At *Brooses* thou had ne'er a fellow,
For pith an' speed;
But ev'ry tail thou pay't them hollow,
Whare'er thou gaed.

The sma', droop-rumpl't, hunter cattle,
Might aiblins waur't thee for a brattle;
But sax Scotch miles thou try't their mettle,
An' gar't them whaizle:
Nae whip nor spur, but just a wattle
O' saugh or hazel.

Thou was a noble *fittie-lan'*,
As e'er in tug or tow was drawn;
Aft thee an' I, in aught hours gaun,
On guid March weather,
Hae turn'd sax rood beside our han',
For days thegither.

Thou never braindg't, an' fetch't, an' fliskit,
But thy auld tail thou wad hae whiskit,
An' spread abreed thy weel-fill'd brisket,
Wi' pith an' pow'r,
Till spritty knowes wad rair't an' risket,
An' slypet owre.

When frosts lay lang, an' snaws were deep,
An' threaten'd labour back to keep,
I gied thy *cog* a wee bit heap
Aboon the timmer:
I ken'd my *Maggie* wadna sleep
For that, or simmer.

In cart or car thou never reestit;
The steyest brae thou wad hae fac't it;
Thou never lap, and sten't, and breastit,
Then stood to blaw;
But just thy step a wee thing hastit,
Thou snoov't awa.

My *pleugh* is now thy bairn-time a':
Four gallant brutes as e'er did draw;
Forbye sax mae, I've sell't awa,
That thou hast nurst:
They drew me threttteen pund an' twa,
The vera warst.

Monie a sair daurk we twa hae wrought,
An' wi' the weary warl' fought!
An' monie an anxious day, I thought
We wad be beat!
Yet here to crazy age we're brought,
Wi' something yet.

And think na, my auld, trusty servan',
That now perhaps thou's less deservin',
An' thy auld days may end in starvin',
For my last *fou*,
A heapit *stimpart*, I'll reserve ane
Laid by for you.

We've worn to crazy years thegither;
We'll toyte about wi' ane anither;

Wi' tentie care I'll flit thy tether,
To some hain'd rig,
Whare ye may nobly rax your leather,
Wi' sma' fatigue.

TO A MOUSE,

ON TURNING HER UP IN HER NEST WITH THE PLOUGH, NOVEMBER, 1785.

Wee, sleekit, cow'rin', tim'rous beastie,
O, what a panic's in thy breastie!
Thou need na' start awa sae hasty,
Wi' bickering brattle!
I wad be laith to rin an' chase thee,
Wi' murd'ring *pattle!*

I'm truly sorry man's dominion
Has broken Nature's social union,
An' justifies that ill opinion
Which makes thee startle
At me, thy poor earth-born companion
An' *fellow-mortal!*

I doubt na, whyles, but thou may thieve;
What then? poor beastie, thou man live!
A *daimen icker* in a *thrave*
'S a sma' request:
I'll get a blessin' wi' the lave,
An' never miss't!

Thy wee bit *housie*, too, in ruin!
Its silly wa's the win's are strewin'!
An' naething, now, to big a new ane,
O' foggage green!
An' bleak December's winds ensuin',
Baith snell an' keen!

Thou saw the fields laid bare an' waste,
An' weary winter comin' fast,
An' cozie here, beneath the blast,
Thou thought to dwell,
Till crash! the cruel *coulter* past
Out thro' thy cell.

That wee bit heap o' leaves an' stibble,
Has cost thee mony a weary nibble!
Now thou's turn'd out, for a' thy trouble,
But house or hald,
To thole the winter's sleety dribble,
An' cranreuch cauld!

But, *Mousie*, thou art no thy lane,
In proving *foresight* may be vain:
The best laid schemes o' *mice* an' *men*,
Gang aft agley,
An' lea'e us nought but grief an pain,
For promis'd joy.

Still thou art blest, compar'd wi' *me!*
The *present* only toucheth thee:
But, Och! I backward cast my e'e
On prospects drear:
An' forward, though I canna *see*,
I *guess* an' *fear*.

A WINTER NIGHT.

Poor naked wretches, wheresoe'er you are,
That bide the pelting of this pitiless storm!
How shall your houseless heads, and unfed sides,
Your loop'd and window'd raggedness, defend you
From seasons such as these?—*Shaksepeare.*

When biting *Boreas*, fell and doure,
Sharp shivers through the leafless bow'r;
When *Phœbus* gi'es a short-liv'd glower
Far south the lift,
Dim-dark'ning through the flaky show'r
Or whirling drift:

Ae night the storm the steeples rocked,
Poor labour sweet in sleep was locked,
While burns, wi' snawy wreaths up-choked,
Wild-eddying swirl,
Or through the mining outlet bocked,
Down headlong hurl.

List'ning, the doors an' winnocks rattle,
I thought me on the ourie cattle,
Or silly sheep, wha bide this brattle
O' winter war,
And through the drift, deep-lairing sprattle,
Beneath a scar.

Ilk happing bird, wee, helpless thing,
That in the merry month o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e?

Ev'n you on murd'ring errands toil'd,
Lone from your savage homes exil'd,
The blood-stain'd roost, and sheep-cote spoil'd,
My heart forgets,
While pitiless the tempest wild
Sore on you beats.

Now *Phœbe*, in her midnight reign,
Dark muffled, view'd the dreary plain;
Still crowding thoughts, a pensive train,
Rose in my soul,
When on my ear this plaintive strain,
Slow, solemn stole—

'Blow, blow, ye winds, with heavier gust!
And freeze, ye bitter-biting frost;
Descend, ye chilly, smothering snows;
Not all your rage, as now, united, shows
More hard unkindness, unrelenting,
Vengeful malice unrepenting,

Than heaven-illumin'd man on brother man bestows!
See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, Want, and Murder o'er a land!
Even in the peaceful rural vale,
Truth, weeping, tells the mournful tale,
How pampered Luxury, Flatt'ry by her side,
The parasite empoisoning her ear,
With all the servile wretches in the rear,
Looks o'er proud property, extended wide;
And eyes the simple rustic hind,
Whose toil upholds the glitt'ring show,
A creature of another kind,
Some courser substance, unrefined,
Placed for her lordly use thus far, thus vile, below.
Where, where is Love's fond, tender throe,
With lordly Honour's lofty brow,
The powers you proudly own?
Is there, beneath Love's noble name,
Can harbour, dark, the selfish aim,
To bless himself alone!
Mark maiden-innocence a prey
To love-pretending snares,
This boasting Honour turns away,
Shunning soft Pity's rising sway,
Regardless of the tears, and unavailing pray'rs!
Perhaps, this hour, in Mis'ry's squalid nest,
She strains your infant to her joyless breast,
And with a mother's fears shrinks at the rocking blast!
Oh ye! who, sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown!
Ill-satisfy'd keen Nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays himself to sleep,
While thro' the rugged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap!
Think on the dungeon's grim confine,
Where guilt and poor misfortune pine!
Guilt, erring man, relenting view!
But shall thy legal rage pursue
The wretch, already crushed low
By cruel Fortune's undeserved blow?
Affliction's sons are brothers in distress,
A brother to relieve, how exquisite the bliss!'

I heard nae mair, for *Chanticleer*
Shook off the pouthery snaw,
And hail'd the morning with a cheer,
A cottage-rousing craw.

But deep this truth impressed my mind—
Thro' all his works abroad,
The heart benevolent and kind
The most resembles God.

EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET.*

January ——

I.

While winds frae aff *Ben-Lomond* blaw,
And bar the doors wi' driving snaw,
And hing us owre the ingle,
I set me down to pass the time,
And spin a verse or twa o' rhyme,
In hamely westlan' jingle.
While frosty winds blaw in the drift,
Ben to the chimla lug,
I grudge a wee the great folk's gift,
That live sae bien and snug:
I tent less, and want less
Their roomy fireside;
But hanker and canker,
To see their cursed pride.

II.

Its hardly in a body's pow'r
To keep at times frae being sour,
To see how things are shar'd;
How best o' chiels are whiles in want,
While coofs on countless thousands rant,
An' ken na how to wair't:
But, *Davie*, lad, ne'er fash your head,
Tho' we hae little gear,
We're fit to win our daily bread,
As lang's we're hale and fier:
'Mair speir na, nor fear na'†
Auld age ne'er mind a feg,
The last o't, the warst o't,
Is only for to beg.

III.

To lie in kilns and barns at e'en,
When banes are craz'd and bluid is thin,
Is, doubtless, great distress!
Yet then, content could make us blest;
Ev'n then sometimes we'd snatch a taste
Of truest happiness.
The honest heart that's free frae a'
Intended fraud or guile,
However fortune kick the ba',
Has aye some cause to smile;
And mind still, you'll find still,
A comfort this nae sma':
Nae mair then, we'll care then,
Nae farther can we fa'.

IV.

What though, like commoners of air,
We wander out we know not where,
But either house or hall?
Yet nature's charms, the hills and woods,
The sweeping vales, and foaming floods,
Are free alike to all.
In days when daisies deck the ground,
And blackbirds whistle clear,

---

* David Sillar, one of the club at Tarbolton, and author of a volume of poems in the Scottish dialect.
† Ramsay.

With honest joy our hearts will bound,
To see the coming year:
On braes when we please, then,
We'll sit and sowth a tune;
Syne *rhyme* till't, we'll time till't,
And sing't when we hae done.

V.

It's no in titles nor in rank;
It's no in wealth like Lon'on bank,
To purchase peace and rest;
It's no in making muckle *mair:*
It's no in books; it's no in lear,
To mak us truly blest!
If happiness hae not her seat
And centre in the breast,
We may be wise, or rich, or great,
But never can be blest:
Nae treasures, nor pleasures,
Could make us happy lang;
The *heart* ay'es the part aye,
That makes us right or wrang.

VI.

Think ye that sic as you and I,
Wha drudge and drive through wet an' dry,
Wi' never-ceasing toil;
Think ye, are we less blest than they,
Wha scarcely tent us in their way,
As hardly worth their while?
Alas! how oft in haughty mood,
God's creatures they oppress!
Or else, neglecting a' that's guid,
They riot in excess?
Baith careless and fearless
Of either heav'n or hell;
Esteeming and deeming
It's a' an idle tale!

VII.

Then let us cheerfu' acquiesce;
Nor make our scanty pleasures less,
By pining at our state;
And, even should misfortunes come,
I here wha sit, hae met wi' some,
An's thankfu' for them yet.
They gie the wit of age to youth;
They let us ken oursel';
They make us see the naked truth,
The *real* guid and ill.
Tho' losses and crosses,
Be lessons right severe,
There's wit there, ye'll get there,
Ye'll find nae other where.

VIII.

But tent me, *Davie*, ace o' hearts!
(To say aught else wad wrang the cartes,
And flatt'ry I detest)
This life has joys for you and I;
And joys that riches ne'er could buy;
And joys the very best.
There's a' *the pleasures o' the heart*,
The lover an' the frien';
Ye hae your *Meg*, your dearest part,
And I my darling *Jean!*
It warms me, it charms me,
To mention but her *name;*
It heats me, it beets me,
And sets me a' on flame!

IX.

O all ye Powers who rule above!
O *Thou* whose very self art *love!*
Thou knowest my words sincere!
The life-blood streaming thro' my heart,
Or my more dear immortal part,
Is not more fondly dear!
When heart-corroding care and grief
Deprive my soul of rest,
Her dear idea brings relief
And solace to my breast.
Thou *Being,* All-seeing,
O hear my fervent pray'r;
Still take her and make her
Thy most peculiar care!

X.

All hail, ye tender feelings dear!
The smile of love, the friendly tear,
The sympathetic glow;
Long since, this world's thorny ways
Had numbered out my weary days,
Had it not been for you!
Fate still has blest me with a friend,
In every care and ill;
And oft a more endearing band,
A tie more tender still.
It lightens, it brightens
The tenebrific scene,
To meet with, and greet with
My *Davie* or my *Jean.*

XI.

O, how that *name* inspires my style!
The words come skelpin' rank and file,
Amaist before I ken!
The ready measure rins as fine,
As *Phœbus* and the famous *Nine*
Were glowrin' owre my pen.
My spaviet *Pegasus* will limp,
Till ance he's fairly het;
And then he'll hiltch, and stilt, and jimp,
An' rin an' unco fit:
But lest then, the beast then,
Should rue his hasty ride,
I'll light now, and dight now
His sweaty wizen'd hide.

THE LAMENT,

OCCASIONED BY THE UNFORTUNATE ISSUE OF A FRIEND'S AMOUR.

Alas! how oft does Goodness wound itself,
And sweet *Affection* prove the spring of woe!—*Home.*

I.

O THOU pale orb, that silent shines,
While care-untroubled mortals sleep!

Thou seest a wretch that inly pines,
And wanders here to wail and weep!
With woe I nightly vigils keep,
Beneath thy wan unwarming beam;
And mourn, in lamentation deep,
How *life* and *love* are all a dream.

II.

I joyless view thy rays adorn
The faintly-marked distant hill:
I joyless view thy trembling horn,
Reflected in the gurgling rill:
My fondly-fluttering heart be still!
Thou busy power, Remembrance, cease!
Ah! must the agonizing thrill
For ever bar returning peace!

III.

No idly-feign'd poetic pains,
My sad, love-lorn lamentings claim;
No shepherd's pipe—Arcadian strains;
No fabled tortures, quaint and tame:
The plighted faith; the mutual flame;
The oft-attested Powers above;
The *promised Father's tender name;*
These were the pledges of my love!

IV.

Encircled in her clasping arms,
How have the raptur'd moments flown!
How have I wish'd for Fortune's charms,
For her dear sake, and hers alone!
And must I think it? is she gone,
My secret heart's exulting boast?
And does she heedless hear my groan?
And is she ever, ever lost!

V.

Oh! can she bear so base a heart,
So lost to honour, lost to truth,
As from the fondest lover part,
The plighted husband of her youth!
Alas! life's path may be unsmooth!
Her way may lie thro' rough distress!
Then, who her pangs and pains will sooth?
Her sorrows share and make them less?

VI.

Ye winged hours that o'er us past,
Enraptur'd more, the more enjoy'd,
Your dear remembrance in my breast,
My fondly-treasur'd thoughts employ'd.
That breast, how dreary now, and void,
For her too scanty once of room!
Ev'n ev'ry ray of hope destroy'd,
And not a wish to gild the gloom!

VII.

The morn that warns th' approaching day,
Awakes me up to toil and woe:
I see the hours in long array,
That I must suffer, lingering, slow.
Full many a pang, and many a throe,
Keen recollection's direful train,
Must wring my soul, ere Phœbus, low,
Shall kiss the distant, western main.

VIII.

And when my nightly couch I try,
Sore-harass'd out with care and grief,
My toil-beat nerves, and tear-worn eye,
Keep watchings with the nightly thief:
Or if I slumber, fancy, chief,
Reigns haggard-wild, in sore affright:
Ev'n day, all-bitter, brings relief,
From such a horror-breathing night.

IX.

O! thou bright queen, who o'er th' expanse
Now highest reign'st, with boundless sway!
Oft has thy silent-marking glance
Observ'd us, fondly wandering, stray:
The time, unheeded, sped away,
While love's luxurious pulse beat high,
Beneath thy silver-gleaming ray,
To mark the mutual-kindling eye.

X.

Oh! scenes in strong remembrance set!
Scenes, never, never, to return!
Scenes, if in stupor I forget,
Again I feel, again I burn!
From ev'ry joy and pleasure torn,
Life's weary vale I'll wander thro';
And hopeless, comfortless, I'll mourn
A faithless woman's broken vow.

DESPONDENCY:

AN ODE.

I.

Oppress'd with grief, oppress'd with care,
A burden more than I can bear,
I sit me down and sigh:
O life! thou art a galling load,
Along a rough, a weary road,
To wretches such as I!
Dim backward as I cast my view,
What sick'ning scenes appear!
What sorrows *yet* may pierce me thro',
Too justly I may fear!
Still caring, despairing,
Must be my bitter doom;
My woes here shall close ne'er,
But with the closing tomb!

II.

Happy ye sons of busy life,
Who, equal to the bustling strife,
No other view regard!
Ev'n when the wished *end's* deny'd,
Yet while the busy *means* are ply'd,
They bring their own reward:
Whilst I, a hope-abandon'd wight,
Unfitted with an *aim*,
Meet ev'ry sad returning night,
And joyless morn the same;

You, bustling, and justling,
Forget each grief and pain;
I, listless, yet restless,
Find ev'ry prospect vain.

III.

How blest the solitary's lot,
Who, all-forgetting, all-forgot,
Within his humble cell,
The cavern wild with tangling roots,
Sits o'er his newly-gather'd fruits,
Beside his crystal well!
Or, haply, to his ev'ning thought,
By unfrequented stream,
The ways of men are distant brought,
A faint collected dream:
While praising, and raising
His thoughts to heav'n on high,
As wand'ring, meand'ring,
He views the solemn sky.

IV.

Than I, no lonely hermit placed
Where never human footstep traced,
Less fit to play the part;
The lucky moment to improve,
And *just* to stop, and *just* to move,
With self-respecting art:
But ah! those pleasures, loves, and joys,
Which I too keenly taste,
The *Solitary* can despise,
Can want, and yet be blest!
He needs not, he heeds not,
Or human love or hate,
Whilst I here must cry here,
At perfidy ingrate!

V.

Oh! enviable, early days,
When dancing thoughtless pleasure's maze,
To care, to guilt unknown!
How ill-exchanged for riper times,
To feel the follies, or the crimes,
Of others, or my own!
Ye tiny elves that guiltless sport,
Like linnets in the bush,
Ye little know the ills ye court,
When manhood is your wish!
The losses, the crosses,
That *active man* engage!
The fears all, the tears all,
Of dim declining *age!*

WINTER:

A DIRGE.

I.

The wintry west extends his blast,
And hail and rain does blaw;
Or, the stormy north sends driving forth
The blinding sleet and snaw:
While tumbling brown, the burn comes down,
And roars frae bank to brae;
And bird and beast in covert rest,
And pass the heartless day.

II.

"The sweeping blast, the sky o'ercast," *
The joyless winter-day,
Let others fear, to me more dear
Than all the pride of May:
The tempest's howl, it soothes my soul,
My griefs it seems to join,
The leafless trees my fancy please,
Their fate resembles mine!

III.

Thou *Power Supreme*, whose mighty scheme
These woes of mine fulfil,
Here, firm, I rest, they *must* be best,
Because they are *Thy* Will!
Then all I want (O, do thou grant
This one request of mine!)
Since to *enjoy* thou dost deny,
Assist me to *resign.*

THE

COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT.

INSCRIBED TO R. AIKEN, ESQ.

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;
Nor grandeur hear, with a disdainful smile,
The short and simple annals of the poor.—*Gray.*

I.

My lov'd, my honour'd, much respected friend!
No mercenary bard his homage pays:
With honest pride I scorn each selfish end,
My dearest meed, a friend's esteem and praise:
To you I sing, in simple *Scottish* lays,
The lowly train in life's sequester'd scene;
The native feelings strong, the guileless ways;
What Aitken in a cottage would have been;
Ah! tho' his worth unknown, far happier there, I ween!

II.

November chill blaws loud wi' angry sough;
The short'ning winter-day is near a close;
The miry beasts retreating frae the pleugh;
The black'ning trains o' craws to their repose:
The toil-worn *Cotter* frae his labour goes,
This night his weekly moil is at an end,
Collects his spades, his mattocks, and his hoes,
Hoping the *morn* in ease and rest to spend,
And weary, o'er the moor, his course does hameward bend.

* Dr. Young.

III.

At length his lonely cot appears in view,
Beneath the shelter of an aged tree;
Th' expectant *wee things*, toddlin, stacher thro' [an' glee.
To meet their Dad, wi' flichterin' noise
His wee bit ingle, blinkin' bonnily,
His clean hearth-stane, his thriftie *wifie's* smile,
The lisping infant prattling on his knee,
Does a' his weary carking cares beguile,
And makes him quite forget his labour an' his toil.

IV.

Belyve the elder bairns come drapping in,
At service out, amang the farmers roun',
Some ca' the pleugh, some herd, some tentie rin
A cannie errand to a neebor town;
Their eldest hope, their *Jenny*, woman grown,
In youthfu' bloom, love sparklin' in her e'e,
Comes hame, perhaps, to show a bra' new gown,
Or deposit her sair-won penny-fee,
To help her parents dear, if they in hardship be.

V.

Wi' joy unfeign'd brothers and sisters meet,
An' each for other's weelfare kindly spiers:
The social hours, swift-wing'd, unnotic'd fleet;
Each tells the uncos that he sees or hears;
The parents, partial, eye their hopeful years;
Anticipation forward points the view.
The *mother*, wi' her needle an' her shears,
Gars auld claes look amaist as weel's the new;
The *father* mixes a' wi' admonition due.

VI.

Their master's an' their mistress's command,
The younkers a' are warned to obey;
And mind their labours wi' an eyedent hand,
And ne'er, tho' out o' sight, to jauk or play:
'An' O! be sure to fear the LORD alway!
An' mind your *duty*, duly, morn an' night!
Lest in temptation's path ye gang astray,
Implore his counsel and assisting might:
They never sought in vain that sought the Lord aright!'

VII.

But hark! a rap comes gently to the door;
Jenny, wha kens the meaning o' the same,
Tells how a neebor lad cam o'er the moor,
To do some errands, and convoy her hame.
The wily mother sees the conscious flame
Sparkle in *Jenny's* e'e, and flush her cheek;
Wi' heart-struck anxious care, inquires his name,
While *Jenny* hafflins is afraid to speak;
Weel pleas'd the mother hears it's nae wild, worthless rake.

VIII.

Wi' kindly welcome *Jenny* brings him ben;
A strappin youth; he taks the mother's eye;
Blithe *Jenny* sees the visit's no ill ta'en;
The father cracks of horses, pleughs, and kye. [joy,
The youngster's artless heart o'erflows wi'
But blate and laithfu', scarce can weel behave;
The mother, wi' a woman's wiles, can spy
What makes the youth sae bashfu' an' sae grave;
Weel pleas'd to think her *bairn's* respected like the lave.

IX.

O happy love! where love like this is found!
O heart-felt raptures! bliss beyond compare!
I've paced much this weary *mortal round*,
And sage *experience* bids me this declare—
'If Heav'n a draught of heavenly pleasure spare,
One cordial in this melancholy vale,
'Tis when a youthful, loving, modest pair,
In other's arms breathe out the tender tale,
Beneath the milk-white thorn that scents the ev'ning gale.'

X.

Is there, in human form, that bears a heart—
A wretch! a villain! lost to love and truth!
That can, with studied, sly, ensnaring art,
Betray sweet *Jenny's* unsuspecting youth?
Curse on his perjur'd arts! dissembling smooth!
Are honour, virtue, conscience all exil'd?
Is there no pity, no relenting ruth,
Points to the parents fondling o'er their child!
Then paints the ruin'd maid, and their distraction wild?

XI.

But now the supper crowns their simple board,
The halesome *parritch*, chief o' *Scotia's* food:
The sowpe their only *Hawkie* does afford,
That 'yont the hallan snugly chows her cood:
The dame brings forth in complimental mood,
To grace the lad, her weel-hain'd kebbuck fell,
An' aft he's prest, an' aft he ca's it guid;
The frugal wifie, garrulous, will tell,
How 'twas a towmond auld, sin' lint was i' the bell.

XII.

The cheerfu' supper done, wi' serious face,
They, round the ingle, form a circle wide;
The sire turns o'er, wi' patriarchal grace,
The big *ha'-Bible*, ance his father's pride:
His bonnet rev'rently is laid aside,
His lyart haffets wearing thin an' bare:
Those strains that once did sweet in Zion glide,

He wales a portion with judicious care ;
And '*Let us worship* GOD!' he says, with solemn air.

XIII.

They chant their artless notes in simple guise ;
They tune their hearts, by far the noblest aim : [rise ;
Perhaps *Dundee's* wild warbling measures
Or plaintive *Martyrs*, worthy of the name ;
Or noble *Elgin* beets the heav'n-ward flame,
The sweetest far of *Scotia's* holy lays :
Compared with these, Italian trills are tame ;
The tickl'd ears no heart-felt raptures raise ;
Nae unison hae they with our Creator's praise.

XIV.

The priest-like father reads the sacred page,
How *Abram* was the *friend of* GOD on high;
Or, *Moses* bade eternal warfare wage
With *Amalek's* ungracious progeny ;
Or how the *royal bard* did groaning lie [ire ;
Beneath the stroke of Heav'n's avenging
Or, *Job's* pathetic plaint, and wailing cry ;
Or rapt *Isaiah's* wild, seraphic fire ;
Or other holy seers that tune the sacred lyre.

XV.

Perhaps the *Christian volume* is the theme,
How guiltless blood for guilty man was shed ; [name,
How *He*, who bore in Heaven the second
Had not on earth whereon to lay his head ;
How his first followers and servants sped ;
The precepts sage they wrote to many a
How *he*, who lone in *Patmos* banished, [land :
Saw in the sun a mighty angel stand ;
And heard great *Bab'lon's* doom pronounced by Heaven's command.

XVI.

Then kneeling down to HEAVEN'S ETERNAL KING, [prays :
The *saint*, the *father*, and the *husband*
Hope 'springs exulting on triumphant wing,*
That *thus* they all shall meet in future
There ever bask in uncreated rays, [days :
No more to sigh or shed the bitter tear,
Together hymning their *Creator's* praise,
In such society, yet still more dear ;
While circling time moves round in an eternal sphere.

XVII.

Compared with this, how poor Religion's pride,
In all the pomp of method, and of art,
When men display to congregations wide,
Devotion's ev'ry grace, except the *heart!*
The *Pow'r*, incensed, the pageant will desert,
The pompous strain, the sacerdotal stole ;
But haply, in some cottage far apart,
May hear, well-pleased, the language of the soul ;
And in his *book of life* the inmates poor enrol.

* Pope's Windsor Forest.

XVIII.

Then homeward all take off their sev'ral way ;
The youngling cottagers retire to rest :
The parent pair their *secret homage* pay,
And proffer up to Heaven the warm request,
That *He* who stills the raven's clam'rous nest,
And decks the lily fair in flow'ry pride,
Would, in the way his wisdom sees the best,
For them and for their little ones provide ;
But chiefly in their hearts with *grace divine* preside.

XIX.

From scenes like these old *Scotia's* grandeur springs,
That makes her loved at home, revered abroad :
Princes and lords are but the breath of kings,
"An honest man's the noblest work of GOD!"
And *certes*, in fair virtue's heav'nly road,
The *cottage* leaves the *palace* far behind ;
What is a lordling's pomp! a cumbrous load,
Disguising oft the wretch of human kind,
Studied in arts of hell, in wickedness refined!

XX.

O *Scotia!* my dear, my native soil!
For whom my warmest wish to Heaven is sent!
Long may thy hardy sons of rustic toil,
Be blest with health, and peace, and sweet content!
And, O! may Heav'n their simple lives prevent
From Luxury's contagion, weak and vile!
Then, howe'er *crowns* and *coronets* be rent,
A *virtuous populace* may rise the while,
And stand a wall of fire around their much-loved *Isle*.

XXI.

O *Thou!* who pour'd the patriotic tide,
That stream'd thro' *Wallace's* undaunted heart ;
Who dared to nobly stem tyrannic pride,
Or nobly die, the second glorious part,
(The patriot's *God*, peculiarly thou art,
His friend, inspirer, guardian, and reward!)
O never, never, *Scotia's* realm desert ;
But still the *patriot* and the *patriot bard*,
In bright succession raise, her ornament and guard!

MAN WAS MADE TO MOURN:

A DIRGE.

I.

WHEN chill November's surly blast
Made fields and forests bare,
One ev'ning, as I wander'd forth
Along the banks of *Ayr*,

I spy'd a man, whose aged step
Seem'd weary, worn with care;
His face was furrow'd o'er with years,
And hoary was his hair.

II.

Young stranger, whither wand'rest thou?
Began the rev'rend sage;
Does thirst of wealth thy step constrain,
Or youthful pleasure's rage?
Or, haply, prest with cares and woes,
Too soon thou hast began
To wander forth, with me, to mourn
The miseries of man!

III.

The sun that overhangs yon moors,
Out-spreading far and wide,
Where hundreds labour to support
A haughty lordling's pride;
I've seen yon weary winter-sun
Twice forty times return;
And ev'ry time has added proofs,
That man was made to mourn.

IV.

O man! while in thy early years,
How prodigal of time!
Mis-spending all thy precious hours;
Thy glorious youthful prime!
Alternate follies take the sway;
Licentious passions burn;
Which tenfold force gives Nature's law,
That man was made to mourn.

V.

Look not alone on youthful prime,
Or manhood's active might;
Man then is useful to his kind,
Supported is his right:
But see him on the edge of life,
With cares and sorrows worn,
Then age and want, Oh! ill-match'd pair!
Show man was made to mourn.

VI.

A few seem favourites of fate,
In pleasure's lap carest;
Yet, think not all the rich and great
Are likewise truly blest.
But, Oh! what crowds in every land,
Are wretched and forlorn;
Thro' weary life this lesson learn,
That man was made to mourn.

VII.

Many and sharp the num'rous ills,
Inwoven with our frame!
More pointed still we make ourselves,
Regret, remorse, and shame!
And man, whose heav'n-erected face
The smiles of love adorn,
Man's inhumanity to man
Makes countless thousands mourn!

VIII.

See yonder poor, o'erlabour'd wight,
So abject, mean, and vile,
Who begs a brother of the earth
To give him leave to toil;
And see his lordly *fellow-worm*
The poor petition spurn,
Unmindful, tho' a weeping wife
And helpless offspring mourn.

IX.

If I'm design'd yon lordling's slave—
By Nature's law design'd,
Why was an independent wish
E'er planted in my mind?
If not, why am I subject to
His cruelty or scorn?
Or why has man the will and pow'r
To make his fellow mourn?

X.

Yet, let not this too much, my son,
Disturb thy youthful breast:
This partial view of human-kind
Is surely not the *last!*
The poor, oppressed, honest man,
Had never, sure, been born,
Had there not been some recompense
To comfort those that mourn!

XI.

O Death! the poor man's dearest friend,
The kindest and the best!
Welcome the hour my aged limbs
Are laid with thee at rest!
The great, the wealthy, fear thy blow,
From pomp and pleasure torn;
But, Oh! a blest relief to those
That, weary-laden, mourn!

A PRAYER

IN THE PROSPECT OF DEATH.

I.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear!

II.

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As *something*, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

III.

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

IV.

Where human *weakness* has come short,
Or *frailty* stept aside,
Do thou, *All Good!* for such thou art,
In shades of darkness hide.

V.

Where with *intention* I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, *Thou art good;* and goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

STANZAS

ON THE SAME OCCASION.

Why am I loath to leave this earthly scene?
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms?
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewed storms:
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms;
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry God,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, 'Forgive my foul offence!'
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my Author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd, yet to temptation ran?

O Thou, great Governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controlling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my pow'rs to be,
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line!
O aid me with thy help, *Omnipotence Divine!*

LYING AT A REVEREND FRIEND'S HOUSE ONE NIGHT, THE AUTHOR LEFT THE FOLLOWING

VERSES,

IN THE ROOM WHERE HE SLEPT.

I.

O thou dread Pow'r, who reign'st above,
I know thou wilt me hear,
When for this scene of peace and love,
I make my prayer sincere.

II.

The hoary sire—the mortal stroke,
Long, long be pleased to spare,
To bless his little filial flock,
And show what good men are.

III.

She, who her lovely offspring eyes
With tender hopes and fears,
O bless her with a mother's joys,
But spare a mother's tears!

IV.

Their hope, their stay, their darling youth,
In manhood's dawning blush;
Bless him, thou God of love and truth,
Up to a parent's wish!

V.

The beauteous, seraph sister-band,
With earnest tears I pray,
Thou know'st the snares on ev'ry hand,
Guide thou their steps alway!

VI.

When soon or late they reach that coast,
O'er life's rough ocean driv'n,
May they rejoice, no wand'rer lost,
A family in Heav'n!

THE FIRST PSALM.

The man, in life wherever placed,
Hath happiness in store,
Who walks not in the wicked's way,
Nor learns their guilty lore!

Nor from the seat of scornful pride
Casts forth his eyes abroad,
But with humility and awe
Still walks before his God.

That man shall flourish like the trees
Which by the streamlets grow;
The fruitful top is spread on high,
And firm the root below.

But he whose blossom buds in guilt
Shall to the ground be cast,
And, like the rootless stubble, tost
Before the sweeping blast.

For why? that God the good adore
Hath giv'n them peace and rest,
But hath decreed that wicked men
Shall ne'er be truly blest.

A PRAYER,

UNDER THE PRESSURE OF VIOLENT ANGUISH.

O THOU Great Being! what thou art
Surpasses me to know:
Yet sure am I, that known to thee
Are all thy works below.

Thy creature here before thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey thy high behest.

Sure thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath!
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves,
To bear and not repine.

THE FIRST SIX VERSES OF

THE NINETIETH PSALM.

O THOU, the first, the greatest Friend
Of all the human race!
Whose strong right hand has ever been
Their stay and dwelling place!

Before the mountains heav'd their heads
Beneath thy forming hand,
Before this pond'rous globe itself
Arose at thy command;

That pow'r which rais'd, and still upholds
This universal frame,
From countless, unbeginning time,
Was ever still the same.

Those mighty periods of years,
Which seem to us so vast,
Appear no more before thy sight,
Than yesterday that's past.

Thou gav'st the word: Thy creature, man,
Is to existence brought:
Again thou say'st, 'Ye sons of men,
Return ye into nought!'

Thou layest them, with all their cares,
In everlasting sleep;
As with a flood thou tak'st them off
With overwhelming sweep.

They flourish like the morning flow'r,
In beauty's pride array'd;
But long ere night cut down, it lies
All wither'd and decay'd.

TO A MOUNTAIN DAISY,

ON TURNING ONE DOWN WITH THE PLOUGH, IN APRIL, 1786.

WEE, modest, crimson-tipped flow'r,
Thou's met me in an evil hour;
For I maun crush amang the stoure
Thy slender stem;
To spare thee now is past my pow'r,
Thou bonnie gem.

Alas! it's no thy neebor sweet,
The bonny *Lark*, companion meet.
Bending thee 'mang the dewy weet!
Wi' spreckl'd breast,
When upward-springing, blithe, to greet
The purpling east.

Cauld blew the bitter-biting north
Upon thy early, humble, birth;
Yet cheerfully thou glinted forth
Amid the storm,
Scarce rear'd above the parent earth
Thy tender form.

The flaunting flow'rs our gardens yield,
High shelt'ring woods and wa's maun shield;
But thou beneath the random bield
O' clod or stane,
Adorns the histie *stibble-field*,
Unseen, alane.

There, in thy scanty mantle clad,
Thy snawie bosom sun-ward spread,
Thou lifts thy unassuming head
In humble guise;
But now the *share* uptears thy bed,
And low thou lies!

Such is the fate of artless Maid,
Sweet *floweret* of the rural shade!
By love's simplicity betray'd,
And guileless trust,
Till she, like thee, all soil'd, is laid
Low i' the dust.

Such is the fate of simple Bard,
On life's rough ocean luckless starr'd,
Unskilful he to note the card
Of *prudent lore*,
Till billows rage, and gales blow hard,
And whelm him o'er!

Such fate to *suffering worth* is giv'n,
Who long with wants and woes has striv'n,
By human pride or cunning driv'n
To mis'ry's brink,
Till wrench'd of every stay but *Heaven*,
He, ruin'd, sink!

Ev'n thou who mourn'st the Daisy's fate,
That fate is thine—no distant date:

Stern Ruin's *plough-share* drives, elate,
Full on thy bloom,
Till crush'd beneath the furrow's weight,
Shall be thy doom!

TO RUIN.

I.

All hail! inexorable lord!
At whose destruction-breathing word,
The mightiest empires fall!
Thy cruel, woe-delighted train,
The ministers of grief and pain,
A sullen welcome, all!
With stern-resolv'd, despairing eye,
I see each aimed dart;
For one has cut my *dearest tie*,
And quivers in my heart.
Then low'ring, and pouring,
The *storm* no more I dread;
Tho' thick'ning and blackn'ing,
Round my devoted head.

II.

And thou grim power, by life abhorr'd,
While life a *pleasure* can afford,
Oh! hear a wretch's prayer:
No more I shrink appall'd, afraid;
I court, I beg thy friendly aid,
To close this scene of care!
When shall my soul, in silent peace,
Resign life's *joyless* day;
My weary heart its throbbings cease,
Cold mouldering in the clay?
No fear more, no tear more,
To stain my lifeless face;
Enclasped, and grasped
Within my cold embrace!

TO MISS L——,

WITH BEATTIE'S POEMS, AS A NEW-YEAR'S GIFT, JAN. 1, 1787.

Again the silent wheels of time
Their annual round have driv'n,
And you, tho' scarce in maiden prime,
Are so much nearer Heav'n.

No gifts have I from Indian coasts
The infant year to hail;
I send you more than India boasts
In *Edwin's* simple tale.

Our sex with guile and faithless love
Is charg'd, perhaps, too true;
But may, dear maid, each lover prove
An *Edwin* still to you!

EPISTLE TO A YOUNG FRIEND.

MAY ——, 1786.

I.

I lang hae thought, my youthfu' Friend,
A something to have sent you,
Tho' it should serve nae other end
Than just a kind *memento;*
But how the subject-theme may gang,
Let time and chance determine;
Perhaps it may turn out a sang,
Perhaps turn out a sermon.

II.

Ye'll try the warld soon, my lad,
And, *Andrew* dear, believe me,
Ye'll find mankind an unco squad,
And muckle they may grieve ye:
For care and trouble set your thought,
E'en when your end's attained;
An a' your views may come to nought,
Where ev'ry nerve is strained.

III.

I'll no say, men are villains a';
The real, harden'd wicked,
Wha hae nae check but human law,
Are to a few restricted:
But och, mankind are unco weak,
An' little to be trusted;
If *self* the wavering balance shake,
Its rarely right adjusted!

IV.

Yet they wha fa' in fortune's strife
Their fate we should na censure,
For still th' *important end* of life
They equally may answer;
A man may hae an honest heart,
Tho' poortith hourly stare him;
A man may tak a neebor's part,
Yet hae nae *cash* to spare him.

V.

Aye free aff han' your story tell,
When wi' a bosom crony;
But still keep something to yoursel'
Ye scarcely tell to ony.
Conceal yoursel' as weel's ye can
Frae critical dissection;
But keek thro' every other man,
Wi' sharpen'd sly inspection.

VI.

The sacred lowe o' weel-plac'd love,
Luxuriantly indulge it;
But never tempt th' *illicit rove*,
Tho' naething should divulge it:
I wave the quantum o' the sin,
The hazard of concealing;
But och! it hardens a' within,
And petrifies the feeling!

VII.

To catch dame Fortune's golden smile,
Assiduous wait upon her;

And gather gear by ev'ry wile
That's justified by honour;
Not for to hide it in a hedge,
Nor for a train-attendant;
But for the glorious privilege
Of being *independent*.

VIII.

The fear o' hell's a hangman's whip
To haud the wretch in order;
But where ye feel your *honour* grip,
Let that aye be your border:
Its slightest touches, instant pause—
Debar a' side pretences;
And resolutely keep its laws,
Uncaring consequences.

IX.

The great *Creator* to revere,
Must sure become the *creature*;
But still the preaching cant forbear,
And ev'n the rigid feature:
Yet ne'er with wits profane to range,
Be complaisance extended;
An Atheist's laugh's a poor exchange
For Deity offended!

X.

When ranting round in pleasure's ring,
Religion may be blinded;
Or, if she gie a *random sting*,
It may be little minded:
But when on life we're tempest-driv'n,
A conscience but a canker—
A correspondence fix'd wi' Heav'n,
Is sure a noble *anchor*.

XI.

Adieu, dear, amiable youth!
Your heart can ne'er be wanting:
May prudence, fortitude, and truth,
Erect your brow undaunting!
In ploughman phrase, 'God send you speed,'
Still daily to grow wiser;
And may you better reck the *rede*,
Than ever did th' adviser!

ON A SCOTCH BARD,

GONE TO THE WEST INDIES.

A' ye wha live by soups o' drink,
A' ye wha live by crambo-clink,
A' ye wha live and never think,
Come mourn wi' me!
Our *billie's* gi'en us a' a jink,
An' owre the sea.

Lament him a' ye rantin core,
Wha dearly like a random-splore,
Nae mair he'll join the *merry roar*,
In social key;
For now he's ta'en anither shore,
An' owre the sea.

The bonnie lassies weel may wiss him,
And in their dear *petitions* place him:
The widows, wives, an' a' may bless him,
Wi' tearfu' e'e;
For weel I wat they'll sairly miss him,
That's owre the sea.

O Fortune, they ha'e room to grumble!
Hadst thou ta'en aff some drowsy bummel,
Wha can do nought but fyke an' fumble,
'Twad been nae plea
But he was gleg as ony wumble,
That's owre the sea.

Auld, cantie *Kyle* may weepers wear,
An' stain them wi' the saut, saut tear;
Twill mak' her poor auld heart, I fear,
In flinders flee;
He was her *laureat* monie a year,
That's owre the sea.

He saw misfortune's cauld *nor-wast*
Lang mustering up a bitter blast;
A jillet brak' his heart at last,
Ill may she be!
So, took a birth afore the mast,
An' owre the sea.

To tremble under Fortune's cummock,
On scarce a bellyfu' o' drummock,
Wi' his proud, independent stomach
Could ill agree;
So, row't his hurdies in a *hammock*,
An' owre the sea.

He ne'er was gi'en to great misguiding,
Yet coin his pouches wad na bide in;
Wi' him it ne'er was *under hiding*;
He dealt it free:
The muse was a' that he took pride in,
That's owre the sea.

Jamaica bodies, use him weel,
An' hap him in a cozie biel;
Ye'll find him aye a dainty chiel,
And fu' o' glee:
He wadna wrang'd the vera deil,
That's owre the sea.

Fareweel, my *rhyme-composing billie!*
Your native soil was right ill-willie;
But may ye flourish like a lily,
Now bonnilie;
I'll toast ye in my hindmost gillie,
Tho' owre the sea.

TO A HAGGIS.

Fair fa' your honest, sonsie face,
Great chieftain o' the puddin-race!

Aboon them a' ye tak your place,
Painch, tripe, or thairm:
Weel are ye wordy of a *grace*
As lang's my arm.

The groaning trencher there ye fill,
Your hurdies like a distant hill,
Your *pin* wad help to mend a mill
In time o' need,
While thro' your pores the dews distil
Like amber bead.

His knife see rustic labour dight,
An' cut you up wi' ready slight,
Trenching your gushing entrails bright,
Like onie ditch;
And then, O what a glorious sight,
Warm-reekin', rich!

Then horn for horn they stretch an' strive,
Deil tak the hindmost, on they drive,
Till a' their weel-swall'd kytes belyve
Are bent like drums;
Then auld guidman, maist like to ryve,
Bethankit hums.

Is there that o'er his French *ragout*,
Or *olio* that wad staw a sow,
Or *fricassee* wad mak her spew
Wi' perfect sconner,
Looks down wi' sneering, scornfu' view,
On sic a dinner?

Poor devil! see him owre his trash,
As feckless as a wither'd rash,
His spindle-shank a guid whip-lash,
His nieve a nit;
Thro' bloody flood or field to dash,
O how unfit!

But mark the rustic, *haggis-fed*,
The trembling earth resounds his tread,
Clap in his walie nieve a blade,
He'll make it whissle;
An' legs, an' arms, an heads will sned,
Like taps o' thrissle.

Ye Pow'rs wha mak mankind your care,
And dish them out their bill o' fare,
Auld Scotland wants na skinking ware
That jaups in luggies;
But, if ye wish her gratefu' pray'r,
Gie her a *Haggis!*

A DEDICATION.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, ESQ.

Expect na, Sir, in this narration,
A fleechin, fleth'rin dedication,
To rooze you up, an' ca' you guid,
An' sprung o' great an' noble bluid,
Because ye're surnamed like *his grace*,
Perhaps related to the race;
Then when I'm tired—and sae are *ye*,
Wi' mony a fulsome, sinfu' lie,
Set up a face, how I stop short,
For fear your modesty be hurt.

This may do—maun do, Sir, wi' them wha
Maun please the great folk for a wamefu';
For me! sae laigh I needna bow,
For, Lord be thankit, *I can plough;*
And when I downa yoke a naig,
Then, Lord be thankit, *I can beg;*
Sae I shall say, and that's nae flatt'rin',
It's just *sic poet* an' *sic patron.*

The Poet, some guid angel help him,
Or else, I fear some ill ane skelp him;
He may do weel for a' he's done yet,
But only he's no just begun yet.

The Patron, (Sir, ye maun forgie me,
I winna lie, come what will o' me)
On ev'ry hand it will allowed be,
He's just—nae better than he should be.

I readily and freely grant,
He downa see a poor man want;
What's no his ain he winna tak it,
What ance he says he winna break it;
Ought he can lend he'll no refuse'
Till aft his goodness is abused;
And rascals whyles that do him wrang,
Ev'n *that*, he does na mind it lang;
As master, landlord, husband, father
He does na fail his part in either.

But then, nae thanks to him for a' that;
Nae *godly symptom* ye can ca' that;
It's naething but a milder feature,
Of our poor, sinfu' corrupt nature:
Ye'll get the best o' moral works,
'Mang black Gentoos and pagan Turks,
Or hunters wild on *Ponotaxi*,
Wha never heard of orthodoxy.
That he's the poor man's friend in need,
The *gentleman* in word and deed,
It's no thro' terror of damnation;
It's just a carnal inclination.

Morality, thou deadly bane,
Thy tens o' thousands thou hast slain!
Vain is his hope, whose stay and trust is
In *moral* mercy, truth, and justice!

No—stretch a point to catch a plack;
Abuse a brother to his back;
Steal thro' a *winnock* frae a wh-re,
But point the rake that taks the *door:*
Be to the poor like onie whunstane,
And haud their noses to the grunstane;
Ply ev'ry art o' *legal* thieving;
No matter, stick to *sound believing.*

Learn three mile pray'rs, an' half-mile graces,
Wi' weel-spread looves, an' lang wry faces;
Grunt up a solemn, lengthen'd groan,
And damn a' parties but your own;

I'll warrant then, ye're nae deceiver,
A steady, sturdy, staunch believer.

O ye wha leave the springs of *Calvin*,
For *gumlie dubs* of your ain delvin!
Ye sons of heresy and error,
Ye'll some day squeel in quaking terror!
When vengeance draws the sword in wrath,
And in the fire throws the sheath;
When ruin, with his sweeping *besom*,
Just frets till Heav'n commission gies him:
While o'er the *harp* pale Misery moans,
And strikes the ever-deep'ning tones,
Still louder shrieks, and heavier groans!

Your pardon, Sir, for this digression,
I maist forgat my *dedication;*
But when divinity comes cross me,
My readers still are sure to lose me.

So, Sir, ye see 'twas nae daft vapour,
But I maturely thought it proper,
When a' my works I did review,
To dedicate them, Sir, to *You:*
Because (ye need na tak it ill)
I thought them something like yoursel'.

Then patronise them wi' your favour,
And your petitioner shall ever—
I had amaist said *ever pray*,
But that's a word I need na say:
For prayin' I hae little skill o't;
I'm baith dead-sweer, an' wretched ill o't;
But I'se repeat each poor man's *pray'r*,
That kens or hears about you, Sir—

"May ne'er misfortune's gowling bark,
Howl thro' the dwelling o' the *Clerk!*
May ne'er his gen'rous, honest heart,
For that same gen'rous spirit smart!
May K———'s far honour'd name
Lang beet his hymeneal flame,
Till H———s, at least a dizen,
Are frae her nuptial labours risen:
Five bonnie lasses round their table,
And seven braw fellows, stout an' able
To serve their king and country weel,
By word, or pen, or pointed steel!
May health and peace, with mutual rays,
Shine on the evening o' his days;
Till his wee curlie *John's* ier-oe,
When ebbing life nae mair shall flow,
The last, sad, mournful rites bestow!"

I will not wind a lang conclusion,
Wi' complimentary effusion;
But whilst your wishes and endeavours
Are blest with Fortune's smiles and favours,
I am, dear Sir, with zeal most fervent,
Your much indebted, humble servant.

But if (which Pow'rs above prevent!)
That iron-hearted carl, *Want*,
Attended in his grim advances,
By sad mistakes, and black mischances,
While hopes, and joys, and pleasures fly him,
Make you as poor a dog as I am,
Your *humble servant* then no more;
For who would humbly serve the poor!
But, by a poor man's hopes in Heaven!
While recollection's power is given.
If, in the vale of humble life,
The victim sad of fortune's strife,
I, thro' the tender gushing tear,
Should recognize my *master dear*,
If friendless, low, we meet together,
Then, Sir, your hand—my *friend and brother!*

TO A LOUSE

ON SEEING ONE ON A LADY'S BONNET AT CHURCH.

Ha! whare ye gaun, ye crowlin' ferlie?
Your impudence protects you sairly:
I canna say but ye strunt rarely,
Owre gauze and lace;
Tho' faith, I fear ye dine but sparely
On sic a place.

Ye ugly, creepin', blastit wonner,
Detested, shunn'd by saunt an' sinner,
How dare you set your fit upon her,
Sae fine a lady!
Gae somewhere else and seek your dinner,
On some poor body.

Swith, in some beggar's haffet squattle;
There ye may creep, and sprawl, and sprattle
Wi' ither kindred, jumpin' cattle,
In shoals and nations;
Whare *horn* nor *bane* ne'er dare unsettle
Your thick plantations.

Now haud you there, ye're out o' sight,
Below the fatt'rils, snug and tight:
Na, faith ye yet! ye'll no be right
Till ye've got on it,
The vera tapmost, tow'ring height
O' *Miss's bonnet.*

My sooth! right bauld ye set your nose out,
As plump and grey as ony grozet;
O for some rank, mercurial rozet,
Or fell, red smeddum,
I'd gi'e you sic a hearty dose o't,
Wad dress your droddum!

I wad na been surprised to spy
You on an auld wife's flannen toy;
Or aiblins some bit duddie boy,
On's wyliecoat;
But Miss's fine *Lunardie!* fie,
How dare ye do't!

O, *Jenny*, dinna toss your head,
An' set your beauties a' abread!
Ye little ken what cursed speed
The blastie's makin'!

Thae *winks* and *finger-ends*, I dread,
Are notice takin' !

O wad some power the giftie gie us
To see oursels as others see us !
It wad frae monie a blunder free us,
And foolish notion :
What airs in dress an' gait wad lea'e us,
And ev'n Devotion !

ADDRESS TO EDINBURGH.

I.

EDINA ! *Scotia's* darling seat !
All hail thy palaces and towers,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sovereign pow'rs !
From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of *Ayr* I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter in thy honour'd shade.

II.

Here wealth still swells the golden tide,
As busy trade his labours plies ;
There architecture's noble pride
Bids elegance and splendour rise ;
Here justice, from her native skies,
High wields her balance and her rod ;
There learning, with his eagle eyes,
Seeks science in her coy abode.

III.

Thy sons, EDINA, social, kind,
With open arms the stranger hail ;
Their views enlarged, their liberal mind,
Above the narrow, rural vale ;
Attentive still to sorrow's wail,
Or modest merit's silent claim ;
And never may their sources fail !
And never envy blot their name.

IV.

Thy daughters bright thy walks adorn !
Gay as the gilded summer sky,
Sweet as the dewy milk-white thorn,
Dear as the raptured thrill of joy !
Fair Burnet strikes th' adoring eye,
Heaven's beauties on my fancy shine :
I see the *sire of love on high*,
And own his work indeed divine !

V.

There, watching high the least alarms,
Thy rough rude fortress gleams afar ;
Like some bold veteran, grey in arms,
And mark'd with many a seamy scar :
The pon'drous wall and massy bar,
Grim-rising o'er the rugged rock ;
Have oft withstood assailing war,
And oft repell'd the invader's shock.

VI.

With awe-struck thought, and pitying tears,
I view that noble, stately dome,
Where *Scotia's* kings of other years,
Famed heroes, had their royal home.
Alas ! how changed the times to come !
Their royal name low in the dust !
Their hapless race wild-wand'ring roam !
Tho' rigid law cries out, 'twas just !

VII.

Wild beats my heart to trace your steps,
Whose ancestors in days of yore,
Thro' hostile ranks and ruin'd gaps
Old *Scotia's* bloody lion bore :
E'en *I* who sing in rustic lore,
Haply *my sires* have left their shed,
And faced grim danger's loudest roar,
Bold-following where *your* fathers led !

VIII.

EDINA ! *Scotia's* darling seat !
All hail thy palaces and tow'rs,
Where once beneath a monarch's feet
Sat legislation's sov'reign pow'rs !
From marking wildly-scatter'd flow'rs,
As on the banks of *Ayr* I stray'd,
And singing, lone, the ling'ring hours,
I shelter'd in thy honour'd shade.

EPISTLE TO J. LAPRAIK,

AN OLD SCOTTISH BARD, APRIL 1st, 1785.

WHILE briers an' woodbines budding green,
An' paitricks scraichin loud at e'en,
An' morning poussie whiddin seen,
Inspire my muse,
This freedom in an *unknown* frien'
I pray excuse.

On fasten-een we had a rockin',
To ca' the crack and weave our stockin' ;
And there was muckle fun and jokin',
Ye need na doubt :
At length we had a hearty yokin'
At *sang about*.

There was ae *sang* amang the rest,
Aboon them a' it pleased me best,
That some kind husband had addrest
To some sweet wife :
It thirl'd the heart-strings thro' the breast,
A' to the life.

I've scarce heard ought described sae weel,
What gen'rous, manly bosoms feel ;
Thought I, ' Can this be Pope, or Steele,
Or Beattie's wark ?'
They tald me 'twas an odd kind chiel
About *Muirkirk*.

It pat me fidgin-fain to hear't,
And sae about him there I spiert,

Then a' that ken't him round declared
He had *ingine*,
That nane excell'd it, few cam near't,
It was sae fine.

That set him to a pint of ale,
An' either douce or merry tale,
Or rhymes an' sangs he'd made himsel',
Or witty catches,
'Tween Inverness and Teviotdale,
He had few matches.

Then up I gat, an' swoor an aith,
Tho' I should pawn my pleugh an' graith,
Or die a cadger pownie's death,
At some dyke back,
A pint an' gill I'd gie them baith
To hear your crack.

But, first an' foremost, I should tell,
Amaist as soon as I could spell,
I to the *crambo-jingle* fell,
Tho' rude and rough,
Yet crooning to a body's sel'
Does weel eneugh.

I am nae *poet*, in a sense,
But just a *rhymer*, like, by chance,
An' hae to learning nae pretence,
Yet, what the matter?
Whene'er my muse does on me glance,
I jingle at her.

Your critic folk may cock their nose,
And say, 'How can you e'er propose,
You wha ken hardly *verse* frae *prose*,
To mak a *sang*?'
But, by your leaves, my learned foes,
Ye're may be wrang.

What's a' your jargon o' your schools,
Your Latin names for horns an' stools;
If honest nature made you *fools*,
What sairs your grammars?
Ye'd better taen up spades and shools,
Or knappin-hammers.

A set o' dull conceited hashes,
Confuse their brains in college classes!
They *gang in* stirks, and *come out* asses,
Plain truth to speak;
An' syne they think to climb Parnassus
By dint o' Greek!

Gie me ae spark o' Nature's fire!
That's a' the learning I desire;
Then tho' I drudge thro' dub an' mire
At pleugh or cart,
My muse, though hamely in attire,
May touch the heart.

O for a spunk o' *Allan's* glee,
Or *Ferguson's*, the bauld and slee,
Or bright *Lapraik's*, my friend to be,
If I can hit it!
That would be lear eneugh for me!
If I could get it.

Now, Sir, if ye hae friends enow,
Tho' real friends, I b'lieve are few,
Yet, if your catalogue be fou,
I'se no insist,
But gif ye want ae friend that's true,
I'm on your list.

I winna blaw about mysel;
As ill I like my faults to tell;
But friends, and folk that wish me well,
They sometimes roose me;
Tho' I maun own, as monie still
As far abuse me.

There's ae *wee faut* they whyles lay to me,
I like the lasses—Guid forgie me!
For monie a plack they wheedle frae me,
At dance or fair;
May be some *ither thing* they gie me
They weel can spare.

But *Mauchline* race, or *Mauchline* fair,
I should be proud to meet you there;
We'se gie ae night's discharge to care,
If we forgather,
An' hae a swap o' *rhyming-ware*
Wi' ane anither.

The four-gill chap, we'se gar him clatter,
An' kirsen him wi' reekin' water;
Syne we'll sit down an' tak our whitter,
To cheer our heart;
An' faith we'se be acquainted better
Before we part.

Awa ye selfish warly race,
Wha think that havins, sense, an' grace,
Ev'n love and friendship, should give place
To *catch the plack!*
I dinna like to see your face,
Nor hear your crack.

But ye whom social pleasure charms,
Whose hearts the tide of kindness warms,
Who hold your being on the terms,
'Each aid the others,'
Come to my bowl, come to my arms,
My friends, my brothers!

But, to conclude my lang epistle,
As my auld pen's worn to the grissle;
Twa lines frae you wad gar me fissle,
Who am, most fervent,
While I can either sing, or whissle,
Your friend and servant.

TO THE SAME.

APRIL 21, 1785.

While new-ca'd kye rout at the stake,
An' pownies reek in pleugh or brake,
This hour on e'enin's edge I take,
To own I'm debtor
To honest-hearted auld *Lapraik*
For his kind letter.

Forjesket sair, with weary legs,
Rattlin' the corn out-owre the rigs,
Or dealing thro' amang the naigs
Their ten hours bite,
My awkart muse sair pleads and begs,
I would na write.

The tapetless ramfeezl'd hizzie,
She's saft at best, and something lazy,
Quo' she, 'Ye ken, we've been sae busy,
This month an' mair,
That trouth my head is grown right dizzie,
An' something sair.'

Her dowff excuses pat me mad;
'Conscience,' says I, 'ye thowless jad!
I'll write, an' that a hearty blaud,
This vera night;
So dinna ye affront your trade,
But rhyme it right.

'Shall bauld *Lapraik*, the king o' hearts,
Tho' mankind were a pack o' cartes,
Roose you sae weel for your deserts,
In terms sae friendly,
Yet ye'll neglect to shaw your parts,
An' thank him kindly!'

Sae I gat paper in a blink,
An' down gaed *stumpie* in the ink:
Quoth I, 'Before I sleep a wink,
I vow I'll close it;
An' if ye winna mak' it clink,
By Jove I'll prose it!'

Sae I've begun to scrawl, but whether
In rhyme, or prose, or baith thegither,
Or some hotch-potch that's rightly neither,
Let time mak proof;
But I shall scribble down some blether
Just clean aff loof.

***

My worthy friend, ne'er grudge an' carp
Tho' fortune use you hard an' sharp;
Come, kittle up your *moorland harp*
Wi' gleesome touch!
Ne'er mind how Fortune *waft* and *warp*;
She's but a b-tch.

She's gien me monie a jirt and fleg,
Sin' I could striddle owre a rig;
But, by the L—d, tho' I should beg,
Wi' lyart pow,
I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow!

Now comes the sax and twentieth simmer,
I've seen the bud upo' the timmer,
Still persecuted by the limmer,
Frae year to year;
But yet, despite the kittle kinnner,
I, Rob, am here.

Do ye envy the city *Gent*,
Behint a kist to lie and sklent,
Or purse-proud, big wi' cent. per cent.
And muckle wame,
In some bit brugh to represent
A *Bailie's* name?

Or is't the paughty feudal thane,
Wi' ruffled sark and glancin' cane,
Wha thinks himself nae sheep-shank bane,
But lordly stalks,
While caps an' bonnets aff are taen,
As by he walks?

'O *Thou* wha gies us each guid gift!
Gie me o' wit and sense a lift,
Then turn me, if *Thou* please, adrift
Thro' Scotland wide:
Wi' cits nor lairds I wadna shift,
In a' their pride!'

Were this the *charter* of our state,
'On pain o' hell be rich and great,'
Damnation then would be our fate,
Beyond remead;
But, thanks to Heav'n! that's no the gate
We learn our creed.

For thus the royal mandate ran,
When first the human race began,
'The social, friendly, honest man,
Whate'er he be,
'Tis he fulfils *great Nature's plan*,
An' none but *he*!'

O mandate glorious and divine!
The ragged followers o' the Nine,
Poor, thoughtless devils! yet may shine
In glorious light,
While sordid sons of Mammon's line
Are dark as night.

Tho' here they scrape, an' squeeze, an' growl,
Their worthless nievefu' o' a soul
May in some future carcase howl
The forest's fright;
Or in some day-detesting owl
May shun the light.

Then may *Lapraik* and *Burns* arise,
To reach their native, kindred skies,
And *sing* their pleasures, hopes, and joys,
In some mild sphere,
Still closer knit in friendship's ties,
Each passing year.

TO W. S——N,

OCHILTREE.

May 1785.

I GAT your letter, winsome *Willie:*
Wi' gratefu' heart I thank you brawlie;
Tho' I maun say't, I wad be silly,
An' unco vain,
Should I believe, my coaxin' billie,
Your flatterin' strain.

But I'se believe ye kindly meant it,
I sud be laith to think ye hinted
Ironic satire, sidelins sklented
On my poor musie;
Tho' in sic phraisin' terms ye've penn'd it,
I scarce excuse ye.

My senses wad be in a creel,
Should I but dare a *hope* to speel,
Wi' *Allan* or wi' *Gilbertfield*,
The braes of fame;
Or *Ferguson*, the writer chiel,
A deathless name.

(O *Ferguson!* thy glorious parts
Ill suited law's dry, musty arts!
My curse upon your whunstane hearts,
Ye E'nbrugh Gentry!
The tithe o' what ye waste at cartes,
Wad stow'd his pantry!)

Yet when a tale comes i' my head,
Or lasses gie my heart a screed,
As whyles they're like to be my dead,
(O sad disease!)
I kittle up my *rustic reed;*
It gies me ease.

Auld *Coila* now may fidge fu' fain,
She's gotten poets o' her ain,
Chiels wha their chanters winna hain,
But tune their lays,
Till echoes a' resound again
Her weel-sung praise.

Nae poet thought her worth his while,
To set her name in measured style;
She lay like some unkenned of isle
Beside *New-Holland*,
Or whare wild-meeting oceans boil
Besouth *Magellan.*

Ramsay an' famous *Ferguson*
Gied *Forth* an' *Tay* a lift aboon;
Yarrow an' *Tweed* to monie a tune,
Owre Scotland rings,
While *Irwin*, *Lugar*, *Ayr*, an' *Doon*,
Nae body sings.

Th' *Ilissus*, *Tiber*, *Thames*, an' *Seine*,
Glide sweet in monie a tunefu' line!
But, *Willie*, set your fit to mine,
An' cock your crest,
We'll gar our streams and burnies shine
Up wi' the best.

We'll sing auld *Coila's* plains an' fells,
Her moors red-brown wi' heather bells,
Her banks an' braes, her dens an' dells,
Where glorious *Wallace*
Aft bure the gree, as story tells,
Frae southern billies.

At *Wallace'* name what Scottish blood
But boils up in a spring-tide flood!
Oft have our fearless fathers strode
By *Wallace'* side,
Still pressing onward, red-wat shod,
Or glorious died.

O sweet are *Coila's* haughs an' woods,
When lintwhites chant among the buds,
An' jinkin hares, in amorous whids,
Their loves enjoy,
While thro' the braes the cushat croods
With wailfu' cry!

Ev'n winter bleak has charms to me
When winds rave thro' the naked tree;
Or frost on hills of *Ochiltree*
Are hoary grey;
Or blinding drifts wild-furious flee,
Dark'ning the day!

O *Nature!* a' thy shows an' forms
To feeling, pensive hearts hae charms!
Whether the summer kindly warms
Wi' life an' light,
Or winter howls, in gusty storms,
The lang, dark night!

The Muse, nae poet ever fand her,
Till by himsel he learn'd to wander,
Adown some trotting burn's meander,
An' no think lang;
O sweet, to stray, an' pensive ponder
A heartfelt sang!

The warly race may drudge and drive,
Hog-shouther, jundie, stretch, an' strive,
Let me fair *Nature's* face descrive,
And I, wi' pleasure,
Shall let the busy, grumbling hive
Bum o'er their treasure.

Fareweel, 'my rhyme-composing brither!'
We've been owre lang unkenn'd to ither:
Now let us lay our heads thegither,
In love fraternal:
May *Envy* wallop in a tether,
Black fiend, infernal!

While highlandmen hate tolls and taxes;
While moorlan' herds like guid fat braxies;
While terra firma on her axis
Diurnal turns,
Count on a friend, in faith and practice,
In *Robert Burns.*

POSTSCRIPT.

My memory's no worth a preen;
I had amaist forgotten clean,
Ye bade me write you what they mean
By this *new-light*,*
'Bout which our *herds* sae aft hae been
Maist like to fight.

In days when mankind were but callans
At *grammar*, *logic*, an' sic talents,
They took nae pains their speech to balance,
Or rules to gi'e,
But spak their thoughts in plain braid lallans,
Like you or me.

In thae auld times, they thought the *moon*,
Just like a sark, or pair o' shoon,
Wore by degrees, till her last roon,
Gaed past their viewing,
An' shortly after she was done,
They gat a new ane.

This past for certain, undisputed;
It ne'er cam i' their heads to doubt it,
Till chiels gat up an' wad confute it,
An' ca'd it wrang;
An' muckle din there was about it,
Baith loud an' lang.

Some *herds*, weel learn'd upo' the beuk,
Wad threap auld folk the thing misteuk;
For 'twas the *auld moon* turn'd a neuk,
An' out o' sight,
An' backlins-comin', to the leuk,
She grew mair bright.

This was deny'd, it was affirm'd;
The *herds* and *hissels* were alarm'd;
The rev'rend grey-beards rav'd an' storm'd,
That beardless laddies
Should think they better were inform'd
Than their auld daddies.

Frae less to mair it gaed to sticks;
Frae words an' aiths to clours an' nicks;
An' monie a fallow gat his licks,
Wi' hearty crunt;
An' some, to learn them for their tricks,
Were hang'd an' brunt.

This game was play'd in monie lands,
An' *auld-light* caddies bure sic hands,
That faith, the youngsters took the sands,
Wi' nimble shanks,
Till lairds forbade, by strict commands,
Sic bluidy pranks.

But *new-light herds* gat sic a cowe,
Folk thought them ruin'd stick-an'-stowe,
Till now amaist on ev'ry knowe,
Ye'll find ane plac'd;
An' some, their *new-light* fair avow,
Just quite barefac'd.

Nae doubt the *auld-light flocks* are bleatin';
Their zealous *herds* are vex'd an' sweatin';
Mysel, I've even seen them greetin'
Wi' girnin' spite,
To hear the *moon* sae sadly lie'd on
By word an' write.

But shortly they will cowe the louns!
Some *auld-light herds* in neebor towns
Are mind't, in things they ca' *balloons*,
To tak' a flight,
An' stay a month amang the *moons*
An' see them right.

Guid observation they will gie them;
An' when the *auld moon's* gaun to lea'e them,
The hindmost shaird, they'll fetch it wi' them,
Just i' their pouch,
An' when the *new-light* billies see them,
I think they'll crouch!

Sae, ye observe that a' this clatter
Is naething but a 'moonshine matter;'
But tho' dull prose-folk Latin splatter
In logic tulzie,
I hope, we bardies ken some better
Than mind sic brulzie.

* See Note, p. 14.

EPISTLE TO J. RANKINE,

ENCLOSING SOME POEMS.

O rough, rude, ready-witted Rankine,
The wale o' cocks for fun and drinkin'!
There's mony godly folks are thinkin',
Your *dreams* * an' tricks
Will send you, Korah-like, a-sinkin',
Straight to auld Nick's.

Ye ha'e sae monie cracks an' cants
And in your wicked, drucken rants,
Ye mak' a devil o' the saunts,
An' fill them fou;
And then their failings, flaws, an' wants,
Are a' seen thro'.

Hypocrisy, in mercy spare it!
That holy robe, O dinna tear it!
Spare't for their sakes wha aften wear it,
The lads in *black!*
But your curst wit, when it comes near it,
Rives't aff their back.

Think, wicked sinner, wha ye're skaithing,
It's just the *blue-gown* badge an' claithing
O' saunts; tak that, ye lea'e them naething
To ken them by,

* A certain humorous *dream* of his was then making a noise in the country-side.

Frae ony unregenerate heathen
Like you or I.

I've sent you here some rhyming ware,
A' that I bargain'd for an' mair;
Sae, when you hae an hour to spare,*
I will expect
Yon *sang*,* ye'll sen't wi' cannie care,
And no neglect.

Tho' faith, sma' heart hae I to sing!
My muse dow scarcely spread her wing!
I've play'd mysel a bonnie spring,
An' danc'd my fill!
I'd better gaen and sair'd the king
At *Bunker's Hill*.

'Twas ae night lately in my fun,
I gaed a roving wi' the gun,
An' brought a *paitrick* to the grun,
A bonnie hen,
And, as the twilight was begun,
Thought nane wad ken.

The poor wee thing was little hurt;
I straikit it a wee for sport,
Ne'er thinkin' they wad fash me for't;
But, deil-ma care!
Somebody tells the *poacher-court*
The hale affair.

Some auld us'd hands had ta'en a note,
That sic a hen had got a shot;
I was suspected for the plot;
I scorn'd to lie;
So gat the whissle o' my groat,
An' pay't the *fee*.

But, by my gun, o' guns the wale,
An' by my pouther an' my hail,
An' by my hen, an' by her tail,
I vow an' swear!
The *game* shall pay o'er moor an' dale,
For this, niest year.

As soon's the clockin' time is by,
An' the wee pouts begun to cry,
L—d, I'se hae sportin' by an' by,
For my gowd guinea:
Tho' I should herd the *buckskin* kye
For't, in Virginia.

Trowth, they had meikle for to blame!
'Twas neither broken wing nor limb,
But twa-three draps about the wame,
Scarce thro' the feathers;
An' baith a yellow George to claim,
An' thole their blethers!

It pits me aye as mad's a hare;
So I can rhyme nor write nae mair,
But *pennyworths* again is fair,
When time's expedient:
Meanwhile I am, respected Sir,
Your most obedient.

* A *song* he had promised the Author.

WRITTEN IN

FRIARS CARSE HERMITAGE,

ON NITH-SIDE.

Thou whom chance may hither lead,
Be thou clad in russet weed,
Be thou deckt in silken stole,
Grave these counsels on thy soul.

Life is but a day at most,
Sprung from night, in darkness lost;
Hope not sunshine every hour,
Fear not clouds will always lour.

As youth and love with sprightly dance,
Beneath thy morning star advance,
Pleasure with her siren air
May delude the thoughtless pair;
Let prudence bless enjoyment's cup,
Then raptur'd sip, and sip it up.

As thy day grows warm and high,
Life's meridian flaming nigh,
Dost thou spurn the humble vale?
Life's proud summits wouldst thou scale?
Check thy climbing step, elate,
Evils lurk in felon wait:
Dangers, eagle-pinion'd, bold,
Soar around each cliffy hold,
While cheerful peace, with linnet song,
Chants the lowly dells among.

As the shades of ev'ning close,
Beck'ning thee to long repose:
As life itself becomes disease,
Seek the chimney-neuk of ease,
There ruminate with sober thought,
On all thou'st seen, and heard, and wrought;
And teach the sportive younker's round,
Saws of experience, sage and sound.
Say, man's true, genuine estimate,
The grand criterion of his fate,
Is not, Art thou high or low?
Did thy fortune ebb or flow?
Did many talents gild thy span?
Or frugal nature grudge thee one?
Tell them, and press it on their mind,
As thou thyself must shortly find,
The smile or frown of awful Heav'n,
To virtue or to vice is giv'n.
Say, to be just, and kind, and wise,
There solid self-enjoyment lies;
That foolish, selfish, faithless ways,
Lead to the wretched, vile, and base.

Thus resign'd and quiet, creep
To the bed of lasting sleep;
Sleep, whence thou shalt ne'er awake,
Night, where dawn shall never break,
Till future life, future no more,
To light and joy the good restore,
To light and joy unknown before.

Stranger, go! Heav'n be thy guide!
Quod the beadsman of Nith-side.

ODE,

SACRED TO THE MEMORY OF MRS. —— OF ——

Dweller in yon dungeon dark,
Hangman of creation! mark
Who in widow-weeds appears,
Laden with unhonoured years,
Noosing with care a bursting purse,
Baited with many a deadly curse!

STROPHE.

View the wither'd beldam's face—
Can thy keen inspection trace
Aught of humanity's sweet melting grace?
Not that eye, 'tis rheum o'erflows,
Pity's flood there never rose
See those hands, ne'er stretch'd to save,
Hands that took—but never gave.
Keeper of Mammon's iron chest,
Lo, there she goes, unpitied, and unblest;
She goes, but not to realms of everlasting rest!

ANTISTROPHE.

Plunderer of armies, lift thine eyes,
(A while forbear, ye tort'ring fiends),
Seest thou whose step unwilling hither bends?
No fallen angel, hurl'd from upper skies;
'Tis thy trusty *quondam mate*,
Doom'd to share thy fiery fate,
She, tardy, hell-ward plies.

EPODE.

And are they of no more avail,
Ten thousand glitt'ring pounds a-year?
In other worlds can Mammon fail,
Omnipotent as he is here?
O, bitter mock'ry of the *pompous bier*,
While down the wretched *vital part* is driv'n!
The cave-lodg'd beggar, with a conscience clear,
Expires in rags, unknown, and goes to Heav'n.

ELEGY

ON

CAPTAIN MATTHEW HENDERSON,

A GENTLEMAN WHO HELD THE PATENT FOR HIS HONOURS IMMEDIATELY FROM ALMIGHTY GOD!

But now his radiant course is run,
For Matthew's course was bright:
His soul was like the glorious sun,
A matchless, Heav'nly light!

O Death! thou tyrant fell and bloody;
The meikle devil wi' a woodie
Haurl thee hame to his black smiddie,
O'er hurcheon hides,
And like stock-fish come o'er his studdie
Wi' thy auld sides!

He's gane, he's gane! he's frae us torn,
The ae best fellow e'er was born!
Thee, Matthew, Nature's sel shall mourn
By wood and wild,
Where, haply, Pity strays forlorn,
Frae man exil'd.

Ye hills, near neebors o' the starns,
That proudly cock your cresting cairns!
Ye cliffs, the haunts of sailing yearns,
Where echo slumbers!
Come join, ye Nature's sturdiest bairns,
My wailing numbers;

Mourn ilka grove the cushat kens!
Ye haz'lly shaws and briery dens!
Ye burnies, wimplin down your glens,
Wi' toddlin' din,
Or foaming strang, wi' hasty stens,
Frae lin to lin.

Mourn little harebells o'er the lee;
Ye stately fox-gloves fair to see;
Ye woodbines, hanging bonnilie
In scented bow'rs;
Ye roses on your thorny tree,
The first o' flow'rs.

At dawn, when ev'ry grassy blade
Droops with a diamond at his head,
At ev'n, when beans their fragrance shed,
I' th' rustling gale,
Ye maukins whiddin thro' the glade,
Come join my wail.

Mourn ye wee songsters o' the wood;
Ye grouse that crap the heather bud;
Ye curlews calling thro' a clud;
Ye whistling plover;
And mourn, ye whirring paitrick brood;
He's gane for ever!

Mourn, sooty coots, and speckled teals;
Ye fisher herons, watching eels;
Ye duck and drake, wi' airy wheels
Circling the lake;
Ye bitterns, till the quagmire reels,
Rair for his sake.

Mourn, clam'ring craiks at close o' day,
'Mang fields o' flow'ring clover gay;
And when ye wing your annual way
Frae our cauld shore,
Tell thae far warlds, wha lies in clay,
Wham we deplore.

Ye houlets, frae your ivy bow'r,
In some auld tree, or eldritch tow'r,
What time the moon, wi' silent glow'r,
Sets up her horn,

Wail thro' the dreary midnight hour
Till waukrife morn!

O rivers, forests, hills, and plains!
Oft have ye heard my canty strains:
But now, what else for me remains
But tales of woe;
An' frae my een the drapping rains
Maun ever flow.

Mourn, spring, thou darling of the year!
Ilk cowslip cup shall kep a tear:
Thou, simmer, while each corny spear
Shoots up its head,
Thy gay, green, flow'ry tresses shear,
For him that's dead!

Thou, autumn, wi' thy yellow hair,
In grief thy sallow mantle tear!
Thou, winter, hurling thro' the air
The roaring blast,
Wide o'er the naked world declare
The worth we've lost!

Mourn him, thou sun, great source of light!
Mourn, empress of the silent night!
And you, ye twinkling starnies bright,
My Matthew mourn!
For through your orbs he's ta'en his flight,
Ne'er to return.

O *Henderson!* the man, the brother!
And art thou gone, and gone for ever!
And hast thou cross'd that unknown river,
Life's dreary bound!
Like thee, where shall I find another,
The world around!

Go to your sculptur'd tombs, ye Great,
In a' the tinsel trash o' state!
But by the honest turf I'll wait,
Thou man of worth!
And weep the ae best fellow's fate
E'er lay in earth

THE EPITAPH.

Stop, passenger! my story's brief;
And truth I shall relate, man:
I tell nae common tale o' grief,
For Matthew was a great man.

If thou uncommon merit hast,
Yet spurn'd at fortune's door, man;
A look of pity hither cast,
For Matthew was a poor man.

If thou a noble sodger art,
That passest by this grave, man;
There moulders here a gallant heart,
For Matthew was a brave man.

If thou on men, their works and ways,
Canst throw uncommon light, man;
Here lies wha weel had won thy praise,
For Matthew was a bright man.

If thou at friendship's sacred ca',
Wad life itself resign, man;
Thy sympathetic tear maun fa',
For Matthew was a kind man.

If thou art staunch without a stain,
Like the unchanging blue, man;
This was a kinsman o' thy ain,
For Matthew was a true man.

If thou hast wit, and fun, and fire,
And ne'er guid wine did fear, man;
This was thy billie, dam, and sire,
For Matthew was a queer man.

If ony whiggish whingin sot,
To blame poor Matthew dare, man;
May dool and sorrow be his lot,
For Matthew was a rare man.

LAMENT OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS,

ON THE APPROACH OF SPRING.

Now Nature hangs her mantle green
On every blooming tree,
And spreads her sheets o' daisies white
Out o'er the grassy lea:
Now Phœbus cheers the crystal streams,
And glads the azure skies;
But nought can glad the weary wight
That fast in durance lies.

Now lav'rocks wake the merry morn,
Aloft on dewy wing;
The merle, in his noontide bow'r,
Makes woodland echoes ring;
The mavis mild wi' many a note,
Sings drowsy day to rest:
In love and freedom they rejoice,
Wi' care nor thrall opprest.

Now blooms the lily by the bank,
The primrose down the brae;
The hawthorn's budding in the glen,
And milk-white is the slae:
The meanest hind in fair Scotland,
May rove their sweets amang;
But I, the Queen of a' Scotland,
Maun lie in prison strang.

I was the Queen o' bonnie France,
Where happy I hae been;
Fu' lightly raise I in the morn,
As blithe lay down at e'en:
And I'm the sovereign of Scotland,
And mony a traitor there;
Yet here I lie in foreign bands,
And never ending care.

But as for thee, thou false woman,
My sister and my fae,
Grim vengeance, yet, shall whet a sword
That thro' thy soul shall gae:
The weeping blood in woman's breast
Was never known to thee;
Nor th' balm that draps on wounds of woe
Frae woman's pitying e'e.

My son! my son! may kinder stars
Upon thy fortune shine;
And may those pleasures gild thy reign,
That neer wad blink on mine!
God keep thee frae thy mother's faes,
Or turn their hearts to thee;
And where thou meet'st thy mother's friend,
Remember him for me!

O! soon, to me, may summer-suns
Nae mair light up the morn!
Nae mair, to me, the autumn winds
Wave o'er the yellow corn!
And in the narrow house o' death
Let winter round me rave;
And the next flow'rs that deck the spring,
Bloom on my peaceful grave.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq.

OF FINTRA.

Late crippled of an arm, and now a leg,
About to beg a *pass* for leave to beg;
Dull, listless, teas'd, dejected, and deprest,
(Nature is adverse to a cripple's rest);
Will generous *Graham* list to his poet's wail?
(It soothes poor misery, hearkening to her tale),
And hear him curse the light he first survey'd,
And doubly curse the luckless rhyming trade?

Thou, Nature, partial Nature, I arraign;
Of thy caprice maternal I complain.
The lion and the bull thy care have found,
One shakes the forest, and one spurns the ground:
Thou giv'st the ass his hide, the snail his shell,
Th' envenom'd wasp, victorious, guards his cell.
Thy minions, kings defend, control, devour,
In all th' omnipotence of rule and power.—
Foxes and statesmen, subtile wiles ensure;
The cit and polecat stink, and are secure;
Toads with their poison, doctors with their drug,
The priest and hedge-hog, in their robes are snug.
Ev'n silly woman has her warlike arts,
Her tongue and eyes, her dreaded spear and darts.

But Oh! thou bitter step-mother and hard,
To thy poor, fenceless, naked child—the Bard!
A thing unteachable in world's skill,
And half an idiot too, more helpless still.
No heels to bear him from the opening dun;
No claws to dig, his hated sight to shun;
No horns, but those by luckless Hymen worn,
And those, alas! not Amalthea's horn:
No nerves olfactory, Mammon's trusty cur,
Clad in rich dulness' comfortable fur,
In naked feeling, and in aching pride,
He bears th' unbroken blast from every side:
Vampyre booksellers drain him to the heart,
And scorpion critics cureless venom dart.

Critics—appall'd, I venture on the name,
Those cut-throat bandits in the paths of fame;
Bloody dissectors, worse than ten Monroes;
He hacks to teach, they mangle to expose.

His heart by causeless, wanton malice wrung,
By blockheads' daring into madness stung;
His well-won bays, than life itself more dear,
By miscreants torn, who ne'er one sprig must wear;
Foil'd, bleeding, tortur'd, in the unequal strife,
The hapless poet flounders on through life,
Till fled each hope that once his bosom fired,
And fled each muse that glorious once inspired,
Low sunk in squalid, unprotected age,
Dead, even resentment, for his injured page,
He heeds or feels no more the ruthless critic's rage!

So, by some hedge, the generous steed deceased,
For half-starv'd snarling curs a dainty feast;
By toil and famine wore to skin and bone,
Lies senseless of each tugging bitch's son.

O dulness! portion of the truly blest!
Calm shelter'd haven of eternal rest!
Thy sons ne'er madden in the fierce extremes
Of fortune's polar frost, or torrid beams.
If mantling high she fills the golden cup,
With sober selfish ease they sip it up; [serve,
Conscious the bounteous meed they well de-
They only wonder 'some folks' do not starve.
The grave sage hern thus easy picks his frog,
And thinks the mallard a sad worthless dog.
When disappointment snaps the clue of hope,
And thro' disastrous night they darkling grope,
With deaf endurance sluggishly they bear,
And just conclude 'that fools are fortune's care.'
So, heavy, passive to the tempest's shocks,
Strong on the sign-post stands the stupid ox.

Not so the idle muses' mad-cap train,
Not such the workings of their moon-struck brain;
In equanimity they never dwell,
By turns in soaring heaven, or vaulted hell.

I dread thee, fate, relentless and severe,
With all a poet's, husband's, father's fear;
Already one strong hold of hope is lost,
Glencairn, the truly noble, lies in dust;
(Fled, like the sun eclips'd as noon appears,
And left us darkling in a world of tears):
O! hear my ardent, grateful, selfish pray'r!
Fintra, my other stay, long bless and spare!

Thro' a long life his hopes and wishes crown,
And bright in cloudless skies his sun go down!
May *bliss domestic* smooth his private path;
Give energy to life; and soothe his latest breath,
With many a filial tear circling the bed of death!

LAMENT FOR JAMES EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

The wind blew hollow frae the hills,
By fits the sun's departing beam
Look'd on the fading yellow woods
That wav'd o'er Lugar's winding stream:
Beneath a craigy steep, a bard,
Laden with years and meikle pain,
In loud lament bewail'd his lord,
Whom death had all untimely ta'en.

He lean'd him to an ancient aik,
Whose trunk was mould'ring down with years;
His locks were bleached white wi' time,
His hoary cheek was wet wi' tears!
And as he touch'd his trembling harp,
And as he tun'd his doleful sang,
The winds, lamenting thro' their caves,
To echo bore the notes alang.

"Ye scatter'd birds that faintly sing,
The relics of the vernal quire!
Ye woods that shed on a' the winds
The honours of the aged year!
A few short months, and glad and gay,
Again ye'll charm the ear and e'e;
But nocht in all revolving time
Can gladness bring again to me.

"I am a bending aged tree,
That long has stood the wind and rain;
But now has come a cruel blast,
And my last hald of earth is gane:
Nae leaf o' mine shall greet the spring,
Nae simmer sun exalt my bloom;
But I maun lie before the storm,
And ithers plant them in my room.

"I've seen sae mony changefu' years,
On earth I am a stranger grown;
I wander in the ways of men,
Alike unknowing and unknown:
Unheard, unpitied, unrelieved,
I bear alane my lade o' care,
For silent, low, on beds of dust,
Lie a' that would my sorrows share.

"And last, (the sum of a' my griefs)!
My noble master lies in clay;
The flow'r amang our barons bold,
His country's pride, his country's stay:
In weary being now I pine,
For a' the life of life is dead,
And hope has left my aged ken,
On forward wing for ever fled.

"Awake thy last sad voice, my harp!
The voice of woe and wild despair!
Awake, resound thy latest lay,
Then sleep in silence evermair!
And thou, my last, best, only friend,
That fillest an untimely tomb,
Accept this tribute from the bard
Thou brought from fortune's mirkest gloom

"In poverty's low barren vale,
Thick mists, obscure, involv'd me round;
Tho' oft I turn'd the wistful eye,
Nae ray of fame was to be found:
Thou found'st me like the morning sun
That melts the fogs in limpid air,
The friendless bard and rustic song,
Became alike thy fostering care.

"O! why has worth so short a date?
While villains ripen grey with time!
Must thou, the noble, gen'rous, great,
Fall in bold manhood's hardy prime!
Why did I live to see that day?
A day to me so full of woe!
O! had I met the mortal shaft
Which laid my benefactor low!

"The bridegroom may forget the bride
Was made his wedded wife yestreen;
The monarch may forget the crown
That on his head an hour has been;
The mother may forget the child
That smiles sae sweetly on her knee;
But I'll remember thee, Glencairn,
And a' that thou hast done for me!"

LINES,

SENT TO SIR JOHN WHITEFORD, OF WHITEFORD, BART. WITH THE FOREGOING POEM.

Thou, who thy honour as thy God rever'st,
Who, save thy *mind's reproach*, nought earthly fear'st,
To thee this votive offering I impart,
"The tearful tribute of a broken heart."
The *friend* thou valued'st, I the *patron* lov'd;
His worth, his honour, all the world approv'd.
We'll mourn till we too go as he is gone,
And tread the dreary path to that dark world unknown.

TAM O' SHANTER:

A TALE.

Of Brownyis and of Bogilis full is this Buke.
Gawin Douglas.

When chapman billies leave the street,
And drouthy neebors, neebors meet,

As market-days are wearing late,
An' folk begin to tak the gate;
While we sit bousing at the nappy,
An' gettin' fou and unco happy,
We think na on the lang Scots miles,
The mosses, waters, slaps, and stiles,
That lie between us and our hame,
Whare sits our sulky sullen dame,
Gathering her brows like gathering storm,
Nursing her wrath to keep it warm.

This truth fand honest *Tam o' Shanter*,
As he frae Ayr ae night did canter,
(Auld Ayr, wham ne'er a town surpasses,
For honest men and bonny lasses).

O *Tam!* had'st thou but been sae wise,
As ta'en thy ain wife *Kate's* advice!
She tauld thee weel thou was a skellum,
A blethering, blustering, drunken blellum;
That frae November till October,
Ae market-day thou was na sober;
That ilka melder, wi' the miller,
Thou sat as lang as thou had siller;
That ev'ry naig was ca'd a shoe on,
The smith and thee gat roaring fou on;
That at the L—d's house, ev'n on Sunday,
Thou drank wi' Kirkton Jean till Monday.
She prophesy'd, that late or soon,
Thou would be found deep drown'd in *Doon*;
Or catch'd wi' warlocks in the mirk,
By *Alloway's* auld haunted kirk.

Ah, gentle dames! it gars me greet,
To think how mony counsels sweet,
How mony lengthen'd sage advices,
The husband frae the wife despises!

But to our tale: Ae market night,
Tam had got planted unco right;
Fast by an ingle, bleezing finely,
Wi' reaming swats, that drank divinely;
And at his elbow, souter *Johnny*,
His ancient, trusty, drouthy crony;
Tam lo'ed him like a vera brither;
They had been fou for weeks thegither.
The night drave on wi' sangs an' clatter;
And aye the ale was growing better:
The landlady and *Tam* grew gracious,
Wi' favours, secret, sweet, and precious;
The souter tauld his queerest stories;
The landlord's laugh was ready chorus:
The storm without might rair and rustle,
Tam did na mind the storm a whistle.

Care, mad to see a man sae happy,
E'en drown'd himself amang the nappy;
As bees flee hame wi' lades o' treasure,
The minutes wing'd their way wi' pleasure:
Kings may be blest, but *Tam* was glorious,
O'er a' the ills o' life victorious!

But pleasures are like poppies spread,
You seize the flow'r, its bloom is shed!
Or like the snow-falls in the river,
A moment white—then melts for ever;
Or like the borealis race,
That flit ere you can point their place;
Or like the rainbow's lovely form
Evanishing amid the storm.—
Nae man can tether time or tide;
The hour approaches *Tam* maun ride;
That hour, o' night's black arch the key-stane,
That dreary hour he mounts his beast in;
And sic a night he taks the road in,
As ne'er poor sinner was abroad in.

The wind blew as 'twad blawn its last;
The rattlin' showers rose on the blast:
The speedy gleams the darkness swallow'd;
Loud, deep, and lang, the thunder bellow'd;
That night, a child might understand,
The deil had business on his hand.

Weel mounted on his grey mare, *Meg*—
A better never lifted leg—
Tam skelpit on thro' dub and mire,
Despising wind, and rain, and fire;
Whiles holding fast his guid blue bonnet;
Whiles crooning o'er some auld Scots sonnet;
Whiles glow'ring round wi' prudent cares,
Lest bogles catch him unawares;
Kirk-Alloway was drawing nigh,
Whare ghaists and houlets nightly cry—

By this time he was cross the ford,
Whare in the snaw the chapman smoor'd;
And past the birks and meikle stane,
Whare drunken *Charlie* brak 's neck-bane;
And thro' the whins, and by the cairn,
Whare hunters fand the murder'd bairn;
And near the thorn, aboon the well,
Whare *Mungo's* mither hanged hersel.—
Before him *Doon* pours all his floods;
The doubling storm roars thro' the woods;
The lightnings flash from pole to pole;
Near and more near the thunders roll;
When, glimmering thro' the groaning trees,
Kirk-Alloway seem'd in a bleeze;
Thro' ilka bore the beams were glancing,
And loud resounded mirth and dancing—

Inspiring bold *John Barleycorn!*
What dangers thou canst make us scorn!
Wi' tippenny, we fear nae evil;
Wi' usquebae we'll face the devil.—
The swats sae ream'd in *Tammie's* noddle,
Fair play, he cared na deils a boddle.
But *Maggie* stood right sair astonish'd,
Till, by the heel and hand admonish'd,
She ventured forward on the light;
And, vow! *Tam* saw an unco sight!
Warlocks and witches in a dance;
Nae cotillion brent new frae *France*,
But hornpipes, jigs, strathspeys, and reels,
Put life and mettle in their heels.
A winnock-bunker in the east,
There sat auld Nick, in shape o' beast;
A towzie tyke, black, grim, and large,
To gie them music was his charge:
He screw'd his pipes and gart them skirl,
Till roof and rafters a' did dirl.—

Coffins stood round like open presses,
That shaw'd the dead in their last dresses;
And by some devilish cantrip slight,
Each in its cauld hand held a light,—
By which heroic *Tam* was able
To note upon the haly table,
A murderer's banes in gibbet airns;
Twa span-lang, wee, unchristen'd bairns:
A thief, new-cutted frae a rape,
Wi' his last gasp his gab did gape;
Five tomahawks, wi' blude red-rusted;
Five scymitars wi' murder crusted;
A garter, which a babe had strangled;
A knife, a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son o' life bereft,
The grey hairs yet stack to the heft;
Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu'
Which ev'n to name wad be unlawfu'.

As *Tammie* glowr'd, amaz'd and curious,
The mirth and fun grew fast and furious:
The piper loud and louder blew;
The dancers quick and quicker flew;
They reel'd, they set, they cross'd, they cleekit,
Till ilka carlin swat and reekit,
And coost her duddies to the wark,
And linket at it in her sark!

Now *Tam, O Tam!* had they been queans
A' plump an' strapping, in their teens;
Their sarks, instead o' creeshie flannen,
Been snaw-white seventeen hunder linen!
Thir breeks o' mine, my only pair,
That ance were plush, o' guid blue hair,
I wad hae gi'en them aff my hurdies!
For ae blink o' the bonnie burdies!

But wither'd beldams, auld and droll,
Rigwoodie hags wad spean a foal,
Lowping and flinging on a crummock,
I wonder didna turn thy stomach.

But *Tam* kenn'd what was what fu' brawlie,
There was ae winsome wench and walie,
That night enlisted in the core,
(Lang after kenn'd on *Carrick* shore!
For mony a beast to dead she shot,
And perish'd mony a bonnie boat,
And shook baith meikle corn and bear,
And kept the country side in fear),
Her cutty-sark, o' Paisley harn,
That while a lassie she had worn,
In longitude though sorely scanty,
It was her best, and she was vauntie.—
Ah! little kenn'd thy reverend grannie,
That sark she coft for her wee *Nannie*,
Wi' twa pund Scots, ('twas a' her riches),
Wad ever grac'd a dance of witches!

But here my muse her wing maun cour;
Sic flights are far beyond her pow'r;
To sing how *Nannie* lap and flang,
(A souple jade she was and strang)
And how *Tam* stood, like ane bewitch'd,
And thought his very een enrich'd:
Even Satan glowr'd, and fidg'd fu' fain,
And hotch'd and blew wi' might and main,
Till first ae caper, syne anither,
Tam tint his reason a' thegither,
And roars out, "Weel done, Cutty-sark!"
And in an instant all was dark;
And scarcely had he *Maggie* rallied,
When out the hellish legion sallied.

As bees bizz out wi' angry fyke,
When plundering herds assail their byke;
As open pussie's mortal foes,
When, pop! she starts before their nose;
As eager runs the market crowd,
When "Catch the thief!" resounds aloud;
So *Maggie* runs, the witches follow,
Wi' monie an eldritch screech and hollow.

Ah, *Tam!* Ah, *Tam!* thou'll get thy fairin,
In hell they'll roast thee like a herrin!
In vain thy *Kate* awaits thy comin!
Kate soon will be a woefu' woman!
Now, do thy speedy utmost, *Meg*,
And win the key-stane * of the brig;
There at them thou thy tail may toss,
A running stream they dare na cross.
But ere the key-stane she could make,
The fient a tale she had to shake!
For *Nannie*, far before the rest,
Hard upon noble *Maggie* prest,
And flew at *Tam* wi' furious ettle;
But little wist she *Maggie's* mettle—
Ae spring brought aff her master hale,
But left behind her ain grey tail:
The carlin claught her by the rump,
And left poor *Maggie* scarce a stump.

Now, wha this tale o' truth shall read,
Ilk man and mother's son take heed:
Whene'er to drink you are inclin'd,
Or cutty-sarks run in your mind,
Think ye may buy the joys o'er dear,
Remember *Tam o' Shanter's* mare.

ON SEEING A WOUNDED HARE LIMP BY ME,

WHICH A FELLOW HAD JUST SHOT AT.

INHUMAN man! curse on thy barb'rous art,
And blasted be thy murder-aiming eye:
May never pity soothe thee with a sigh,
Nor ever pleasure glad thy cruel heart!

Go live, poor wanderer of the wood and field,
The bitter little that of life remains:

* It is a well known fact, that witches, or any evil spirits, have no power to follow a poor wight any farther than the middle of the next running stream.—It may be proper likewise to mention to the benighted traveller, that when he falls in with *bogles*, whatever danger may be in his going forward, there is much more hazard in turning back.

No more the thickening brakes and verdant plains,
To thee shall home, or food, or pastime yield.

Seek, mangled wretch, some place of wonted rest,
No more of rest, but now thy dying bed!
The sheltering rushes whistling o'er thy head,
The cold earth with thy bloody bosom prest.

Oft as by winding Nith, I musing wait
The sober eve, or hail the cheerful dawn,
I'll miss thee sporting o'er the dewy lawn,
And curse the ruffian's aim, and mourn thy hapless fate.

ADDRESS TO THE SHADE OF THOMSON,

ON CROWNING HIS BUST AT EDNAM, ROXBURGHSHIRE, WITH BAYS.

While virgin Spring, by Eden's flood,
Unfolds her tender mantle green,
Or pranks the sod in frolic mood,
Or tunes Eolian strains between:

While Summer, with a matron grace,
Retreats to Dryburgh's cooling shade,
Yet oft, delighted, stops to trace
The progress of the spiky blade;

While Autumn, benefactor kind,
By Tweed erects his aged head,
And sees, with self-approving mind,
Each creature on his bounty feed:

While maniac Winter rages o'er
The hills whence classic Yarrow flows,
Rousing the turbid torrent's roar,
Or sweeping, wild, a waste of snows:

So long, sweet Poet of the year,
Shall bloom that wreath thou well hast won;
While Scotia, with exulting tear,
Proclaims that Thomson was her son.

EPITAPHS.

ON A CELEBRATED RULING ELDER.

Here souter John in death does sleep;
To hell, if he's gane thither,
Satan, gie him thy gear to keep,
He'll haud it weel thegither.

ON A NOISY POLEMIC.

Below thir stanes lie Jamie's banes:
O Death, its my opinion,
Thou ne'er took such a bleth'rin bitch
Into thy dark dominion!

ON WEE JOHNNY.

Hic jacet wee *Johnny.*

Whoe'er thou art, O reader, know,
That death has murder'd Johnny!
An' here his *body* lies fu' low—
For *saul*, he ne'er had ony.

FOR THE AUTHOR'S FATHER.

O ye whose cheek the tear of pity stains,
Draw near with pious rev'rence and attend!
Here lie the loving husband's dear remains,
The tender father and the gen'rous friend.

The pitying heart that felt for human woe;
The dauntless heart that fear'd no human pride;
The friend of man, to vice alone a foe;
"For ev'n his failings leaned to virtue's side."*

FOR R. A. Esq.

Know thou, O stranger to the fame
Of this much lov'd, much honour'd name!
(For none that knew him need be told)
A warmer heart death ne'er made cold.

FOR G. H. Esq.

The poor man weeps—here *G——n* sleeps,
Whom canting wretches blam'd:
But with *such as he*, where'er he be,
May I be *saved* or *d——d!*

A BARD'S EPITAPH.

Is there a whim-inspired fool,
Owre fast for thought, owre hot for rule,
Owre blate to seek, owre proud to snool,
Let him draw near;
And owre this grassy heap sing dool,
And drap a tear.

Is there a bard of rustic song,
Who, noteless, steals the crowds among,

* Goldsmith.

That weekly this area throng,
O, pass not by!
But, with a frater-feeling strong,
Here heave a sigh.

Is there a man, whose judgment clear,
Can others teach the course to steer,
Yet runs, himself, life's mad career,
Wild as the wave;
Here pause—and, through the starting tear,
Survey this grave.

The poor inhabitant below,
Was quick to learn and wise to know,
And keenly felt the friendly glow,
And softer flame,
But thoughtless follies laid him low,
And stain'd his name!

Reader, attend—whether thy soul
Soars fancy's flights beyond the pole,
Or darkling grubs this earthly hole,
In low pursuit;
Know, prudent, cautious, *self-control,*
Is wisdom's root.

ON THE LATE

CAPTAIN GROSE'S

PEREGRINATIONS THROUGH SCOTLAND, COLLECTING THE ANTIQUITIES OF THAT KINGDOM.

HEAR, Land o' Cakes, and brither Scots,
Frae Maidenkirk to Johnny Groat's;
If there's a hole in a' your coats,
I rede you tent it:
A chield's amang you, taking notes,
And, faith, he'll prent it.

If in your bounds ye chance to light
Upon a fine, fat, fodgel wight,
O' stature short, but genius bright,
That's he, mark weel—
And wow! he has an unco slight
O' cauk and keel.

By some auld, houlet-haunted biggin,*
Or kirk, deserted by its riggin,
It's ten to ane ye'll find him snug in
Some eldritch part,
Wi' deils, they say, L—d safe's! colleaguin'
At some black art.—

Ilk ghaist that haunts auld ha' or chamer,
Ye gipsey-gang that deal in glamor,
And you deep-read in hell's black grammar,
Warlocks and witches;
Ye'll quake at his conjuring hammer,
Ye midnight bitches.

It's tauld he was a sodger bred,
And ane wad rather fa'n than fled;
But now he's quat the spurtle blade,
And dog-skin wallet,
And ta'en the—*Antiquarian trade,*
I think they call it.

He has a fouth o' auld nick nackets:
Rusty airn caps and jinglin' jackets,*
Wad had the Lothians three in tackets,
A towmont guid:
And parritch pats, and auld saut-backets,
Before the Flood.

Of Eve's first fire he has a cinder;
Auld Tubal Cain's fire-shool and fender;
That which distinguished the gender
O' Balaam's ass;
A broom-stick o' the witch of Endor,
Weel shod wi' brass.

Forbye, he'll shape you aff, fu' gleg,
The cut of Adam's philibeg;
The knife that nicket Abel's craig,
He'll prove you fully,
It was a faulding jocteleg,
Or lang-kail gullie.—

But wad ye see him in his glee,
For meikle glee and fun has he,
Then set him down, and twa or three
Guid fellows wi' him;
And *port, O port!* Shine thou a wee,
And then ye'll see him!

Now, by the pow'rs o' verse and prose!
Thou art a dainty chiel, O Grose!—
Whae'er o' thee shall ill suppose,
They sair misca' thee;
I'd take the rascal by the nose,
Wad say, Shame fa' thee!

* Vide his Antiquities of Scotland.

TO MISS CRUIKSHANKS,

A VERY YOUNG LADY, WRITTEN ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A BOOK, PRESENTED TO HER BY THE AUTHOR.

BEAUTEOUS rose-bud, young and gay,
Blooming on thy early May,
Never may'st thou, lovely flow'r,
Chilly shrink in sleety show'r!
Never Boreas' hoary path,
Never Eurus' pois'nous breath,
Never baleful stellar lights,
Taint thee with untimely blights!
Never, never reptile thief
Riot on thy virgin leaf!
Nor even Sol too fiercely view
Thy bosom blushing still with dew!

May'st thou long, sweet crimson gem,
Richly deck thy native stem;

* Vide his treatise on Ancient Armour and Weapons.

Till some ev'ning, sober, calm,
Dropping dews, and breathing balm,
While all around the woodland rings,
And ev'ry bird thy requiem sings;
Thou, amid the dirgeful sound,
Shed thy dying honours round,
And resign to parent earth
The loveliest form she e'er gave birth.

ON READING IN A NEWSPAPER, THE DEATH OF

JOHN M'LEOD, Esq.

BROTHER TO A YOUNG LADY, A PARTICULAR FRIEND OF THE AUTHOR'S.

Sad thy tale, thou idle page,
And rueful thy alarms:
Death tears the brother of her love
From Isabella's arms.

Sweetly deck'd with pearly dew
The morning rose may blow;
But, cold successive noontide blasts
May lay its beauties low.

Fair on Isabella's morn
The sun propitious smil'd;
But, long ere noon, succeeding clouds
Succeeding hopes beguil'd.

Fate oft tears the bosom chords
That nature finest strung:
So Isabella's heart was form'd,
And so that heart was rung.

Dread Omnipotence, alone,
Can heal the wound he gave;
Can point the brimful grief-worn eyes
To scenes beyond the grave.

Virtuous blossoms there shall blow,
And fear no withering blast;
There Isabella's spotless worth
Shall happy be at last.

THE HUMBLE PETITION OF BRUAR-WATER.*

TO THE NOBLE DUKE OF ATHOLE.

My Lord, I know your noble ear
Woe ne'er assails in vain;
Embolden'd thus, I beg you'll hear
Your humble slave complain,
How saucy Phœbus' scorching beams,
In flaming summer-pride,
Dry-withering, waste my foaming streams,
And drink my crystal tide.

The lightly-jumpin glowrin trouts,
That thro' my waters play,
If, in their random, wanton spouts,
They near the margin stray;
If, hapless chance! they linger lang,
I'm scorching up so shallow,
They're left the whitening stanes amang,
In gasping death to wallow.

Last day I grat, wi' spite and teen,
As poet B—— came by,
That, to a bard I should be seen,
Wi' half my channel dry:
A panegyric rhyme, I ween,
Even as I was he shor'd me:
But had I in my glory been,
He, kneeling, wad ador'd me.

Here, foaming down the shelvy rocks,
In twisting strength I rin;
There, high my boiling torrent smokes,
Wild-roaring o'er a linn:
Enjoying large each spring and well
As nature gave them me,
I am, although I say't mysel,
Worth gaun a mile to see.

Would then my noble master please
To grant my highest wishes,
He'll shade my banks wi' tow'ring trees,
And bonnie spreading bushes;
Delighted doubly then, my Lord,
You'll wander on my banks,
And listen mony a grateful bird
Return you tuneful thanks.

The sober laverock, warbling wild,
Shall to the skies aspire;
The gowdspink, music's gayest child,
Shall sweetly join the choir:
The blackbird strong, the lintwhite clear,
The mavis wild and mellow;
The robin pensive autumn cheer,
In all her locks of yellow.

This too, a covert shall ensure,
To shield them from the storm;
And coward maukin sleep secure,
Low in her grassy form.
Here shall the shepherd make his seat,
To weave his crown of flowers;
Or find a shelt'ring safe retreat,
From prone descending showers.

And here, by sweet endearing stealth,
Shall meet the loving pair,
Despising worlds with all their wealth
As empty idle care:
The flow'rs shall vie in all their charms
The hour of heav'n to grace,
And birks extend their fragrant arms
To screen the dear embrace.

* Bruar Falls, in Athole, are exceedingly picturesque and beautiful; but their effect is much impaired by the want of trees and shrubs.

Here, haply too, at vernal dawn,
Some musing bard may stray,
And eye the smoking, dewy lawn,
And misty mountain, grey;
Or, by the reaper's nightly beam,
Mild chequering through the trees,
Rave to my darkly dashing stream,
Hoarse-swelling on the breeze.

Let lofty firs, and ashes cool,
My lowly banks o'erspread,
And view, deep-bending in the pool,
Their shadows' watery bed!
Let fragrant birks in woodbines drest,
My craggy cliffs adorn;
And, for the little songster's nest,
The close embow'ring thorn.

So may old Scotia's darling hope,
Your little angel band,
Spring, like their fathers, up to prop
Their honour'd native land!
So may thro' Albion's farthest ken,
To social-flowing glasses,
The grace be—"Athole's honest men,
And Athole's bonnie lasses!"

ON SCARING SOME WATER-FOWL,

IN LOCH-TURIT;

A WILD SCENE AMONG THE HILLS OF OCHTERTYRE.

Why, ye tenants of the lake,
For me your watery haunt forsake?
Tell me, fellow-creatures, why
At my presence thus you fly?
Why disturb your social joys,
Parent, filial, kindred ties?—
Common friend to you and me,
Nature's gifts to all are free:
Peaceful keep your dimpling wave,
Busy feed, or wanton lave;
Or, beneath the sheltering rock,
Bide the surging billow's shock.

Conscious, blushing for our race,
Soon, too soon, your fears I trace.
Man, your proud usurping foe,
Would be lord of all below;
Plumes himself in Freedom's pride,
Tyrant stern to all beside.

The eagle, from the cliffy brow,
Marking you his prey below,
In his breast no pity dwells,
Strong necessity compels.
But man, to whom alone is giv'n
A ray direct from pitying heav'n,
Glorious in his heart humane—
And creatures for his pleasure slain.

In these savage, liquid plains,
Only known to wand'ring swains,
Where the mossy riv'let strays;
Far from human haunts and ways;
All on nature you depend,
And life's poor season peaceful spend.

Or, if man's superior might,
Dare invade your native right,
On the lofty ether borne,
Man with all his pow'rs you scorn:
Swiftly seek, on clanging wings,
Other lakes and other springs;
And the foe you cannot brave,
Scorn at least to be his slave.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL

OVER THE CHIMNEY-PIECE IN THE PARLOUR OF THE INN AT KENMORE, TAYMOUTH.

Admiring Nature in her wildest grace,
These northern scenes with weary feet I trace;
O'er many a winding dale and painful steep,
Th' abodes of covey'd grouse and timid sheep,
My savage journey, curious, I pursue,
Till fam'd Breadalbane opens to my view—
The meeting clifs each deep-sunk glen divides,
The woods, wild-scatter'd, clothe their ample sides;
Th' outstretching lake, embosom'd 'mong the hills,
The eye with wonder and amazement fills;
The Tay meand'ring sweet in infant pride,
The palace rising on his verdant side,
The lawns wood-fringed in Natures native taste;
The hillocks dropt in Nature's careless haste!
The arches striding o'er the new-born stream;
The village, glittering in the moontide beam—
. . . . . .
Poetic ardours in my bosom swell,
Lone wandering by the hermit's mossy cell:
The sweeping theatre of hanging woods;
The incessant roar of headlong tumbling floods—
. . . . . .
Here Poesy might wake her heav'n-taught lyre,
And look through nature with creative fire;
Here, to the wrongs of fate half reconcil'd,
Misfortune's lighten'd steps might wander wild;
And disappointment, in these lonely bounds,
Find balm to soothe her bitter rankling wounds:
Here heart-struck Grief might heaven-ward stretch her scan,
And injur'd worth forget and pardon man.

WRITTEN WITH A PENCIL,

STANDING BY THE FALL OF FYERS, NEAR LOCH-NESS.

Among the heathy hills and ragged woods
The roaring Fyers pours his mossy floods;
Till full he dashes on the rocky mounds,
Where, thro' a shapeless breach, his stream resounds.

As high in air the bursting torrents flow,
As deep recoiling surges foam below,
Prone down the rock the whitening sheet descends,
And viewless echo's ear, astonish'd, rends.
Dim-seen, through rising mists, and ceaseless showers,
The hoary cavern, wide-surrounding lowers.
Still thro' the gap the struggling river toils,
And still below, the horrid caldron boils—

* * * * * *

ON THE BIRTH OF A

POSTHUMOUS CHILD,

BORN IN PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES OF FAMILY DISTRESS.

Sweet Flow'ret, pledge o' meikle love,
And ward o' mony a prayer,
What heart o' stane wad thou na move,
Sae helpless, sweet, and fair!

November hirples o'er the lea,
Chill on thy lovely form;
And gane, alas! the shelt'ring tree,
Should shield thee frae the storm.

May He who gives the rain to pour,
And wings the blast to blaw,
Protect thee frae the driving shower,
The bitter frost and snaw!

May He, the friend of woe and want,
Who heals life's various stounds,
Protect and guard the mother plant,
And heal her cruel wounds!

But late she flourish'd, rooted fast,
Fair on the summer morn:
Now feebly bends she in the blast,
Unshelter'd and forlorn.

Blest be thy bloom, thou lovely gem,
Unscath'd by ruffian hand!
And from thee many a parent stem
Arise to deck our land!

THE WHISTLE:

A BALLAD.

As the authentic *prose* history of the Whistle is curious, I shall here give it.—In the train of Anne of Denmark, when she came to Scotland with our James the Sixth, there came over also a Danish gentleman of gigantic stature and great prowess, and a matchless champion of Bacchus. He had a little ebony Whistle which at the commencement of the orgies he laid on the table, and whoever was last able to blow it, every body else being disabled by the potency of the bottle, was to carry off the Whistle as a trophy of victory. The Dane produced credentials of his victories without a single defeat, at the courts of Copenhagen, Stockholm, Moscow, Warsaw, and several of the petty courts in Germany; and challenged the Scots Bacchanalians to the alternative of trying his prowess, or else of acknowledging their inferiority. After many overthrows on the part of the Scots, the Dane was encountered by Sir Robert Lawrie of Maxwelton, ancestor of the present worthy baronet of that name; who, after three days and three nights' hard contest, left the Scandinavian under the table,

And blew on the Whistle his requiem shrill.

Sir Walter, son to Sir Robert before mentioned, afterwards lost the Whistle to Walter Riddel, of Glenriddel, who had married a sister of Sir Walter's.—On Friday, the 16th of October 1790, at Friars-Carse, the Whistle was once more contended for, as related in the ballad, by the present Sir Robert Lawrie of Maxwelton; Robert Riddel, Esq. of Glenriddel, lineal descendant and representative of Walter Riddel, who won the Whistle, and in whose family it had continued; and Alexander Ferguson, Esq. of Craigdarroch, likewise descended of the great Sir Robert; which last gentleman carried off the hard-won honours of the field.

I sing of a Whistle, a Whistle of worth,
I sing of a Whistle, the pride of the North,
Was brought to the court of our good Scottish king,
And long with this Whistle all Scotland shall ring.

Old Loda,* still rueing the arm of Fingal,
The god of the bottle sends down from his hall—
"This Whistle's your challenge, to Scotland get o'er,
And drink them to hell, Sir! or ne'er see me more!"

Old poets have sung, and old chronicles tell,
What champions ventur'd, what champions fell;
The son of great Loda was conqueror still,
And blew on the Whistle his requiem shrill.

Till Robert, the lord of the Cairn and the Scaur,
Unmatch'd at the bottle, unconquer'd in war,
He drank his poor god-ship as deep as the sea,
No tide of the Baltic e'er drunker than he.

Thus Robert, victorious, the trophy has gain'd;
Which now in his house has for ages remain'd;

---

* See Ossian's Caric-thura.

Till three noble chieftains, and all of his blood,
The jovial contest again have renew'd.

Three joyous good fellows, with hearts clear of flaw;
Craigdarroch, so famous for wit, worth, and law;
And trusty Glenriddel, so skill'd in old coins;
And gallant Sir Robert, deep read in old wines.

Craigdarroch began, with a tongue smooth as oil,
Desiring Glenriddel to yield up the spoil;
Or else he would muster the heads of the clan,
And once more, in claret, try which was the man.

"By the gods of the ancients," Glenriddel replies,
"Before I surrender so glorious a prize,
I'll conjure the ghost of the great Rorie More,*
And bumper his horn with him twenty times o'er."

Sir Robert, a soldier, no speech would pretend,
But he ne'er turn'd his back on his foe—or his friend,
Said, Toss down the Whistle, the prize of the field,
And knee-deep in claret, he'd die or he'd yield.

To the board of Glenriddel our heroes repair,
So noted for drowning of sorrow and care;
But for wine and for welcome not more known to fame,
Than the sense, wit, and taste, of a sweet lovely dame.

A bard was selected to witness the fray,
And tell future ages the feats of the day;
A bard who detested all sadness and spleen,
And wish'd that Parnassus a vineyard had been.

The dinner being over, the claret they ply,
And every new cork is a new spring of joy;
In the bands of old friendship and kindred so set,
And the bands grew the tighter the more they were wet.

Gay pleasure ran riot as bumpers ran o'er;
Bright Phœbus ne'er witness'd so joyous a core,
And vowed that to leave them he was quite forlorn,
Till Cynthia hinted he'd see them next morn.

Six bottles a-piece had well wore out the night,
When gallant Sir Robert, to finish the fight,
Turn'd o'er in one bumper a bottle of red,
And swore 'twas the way that their ancestors did.

Then worthy Glenriddel, so cautious and sage,
No longer the warfare, ungodly, would wage;
A high-ruling Elder to wallow in wine!
He left the foul business to folks less divine.

The gallant Sir Robert fought hard to the end;
But who can with fate and quart bumpers contend?
Though fate said—a hero should perish in light;
So uprose bright Phœbus—and down fell the knight.

Next uprose our bard, like a prophet in drink:—
"Craigdarroch, thou'lt soar when creation shall sink;
But if thou would flourish immortal in rhyme,
Come—one bottle more—and have at the sublime!

"Thy line, that have struggled for Freedom with Bruce,
Shall heroes and patriots ever produce;
So thine be the laurel, and mine be the bay;
The field thou hast won, by you bright god of day!"

* See Johnson's Tour to the Hebrides.

SECOND EPISTLE TO DAVIE,

A BROTHER POET. †

AULD NEEBOR,

I'M three times doubly o'er your debtor,
For your auld-farrent, frien'ly letter;
Tho' I maun say't, I doubt ye flatter,
Ye speak so fair:
For my puir, silly, rhymin' clatter,
Some less maun sair.

Hale be your heart, hale be your fiddle;
Lang may your elbuck jink and diddle,
To cheer you through the weary widdle
O' war'ly cares,
Till bairns' bairns kindly cuddle
Your auld grey hairs.

But Davie, lad, I'm red ye're glaikit;
I'm tauld the Muse ye hae negleckit;
An' gif it's sae, ye sud be lickit
Until ye fyke;
Sic hans as you sud ne'er be faikit,
Be hain't wha like.

† This is prefixed to the poems of David Sillar, published at Kilmarnock, 1789, and has not before appeared in our author's printed poems.

For me, I'm on Parnassus brink,
Rivin' the words to gar them clink;
Whyles daez't wi' love, whyles daez't wi' drink,
Wi' jads or masons;
An' whyles, but aye owre late, I think,
Braw sober lessons.

Of a' the thoughtless sons o' man,
Commen' me to the bardie clan;
Except it be some idle plan
O' rhymin' clink,
The devil-haet, that I sud ban,
They ever think.

Nae thought, nae view, nae scheme of livin';
Nae cares to gie us joy or grievin':
But just the pouchie put the nieve in,
An' while ought's there,
Then, hiltie, skiltie, we gae scrievin',
An' fash nae mair.

Leeze me on rhyme! it's aye a treasure,
My chief, amaist my only pleasure,
At hame, a-fiel', at wark or leisure,
The Muse, poor hizzie!
Tho' rough an' raploch be her measure,
She's seldom lazy.

Haud to the Muse, my dainty Davie:
The warl' may play you mony a shavie;
But for the Muse, she'll never leave ye,
Tho' e'er sae poor,
Na, even tho' limpin' wi' the spavie
Frae door tae door.

ON MY EARLY DAYS.

I.

I MIND it weel in early date,
When I was beardless, young, and blate,
An' first could thresh the barn,
Or haud a yokin o' the pleugh,
An' tho' forfoughten sair enough,
Yet unco proud to learn—
When first amang the yellow corn
A man I reckon'd was,
And wi' the lave ilk merry morn
Could rank my rig and lass—
Still shearing, and clearing
The tither stooked raw,
Wi' claivers, an' haivers,
Wearing the day awa.

II.

E'en then a wish, I mind its pow'r,
A wish that to my latest hour
Shall strongly heave my breast,
That I for poor auld Scotland's sake,
Some usefu' plan or book could make,
Or sing a sang, at least.
The rough burr-thistle, spreading wide
Amang the bearded bear,
I turn'd the weeder-clips aside,
An' spared the symbol dear:
No nation, no station,
My envy e'er could raise,
A Scot still, but blot still,
I knew nae higher praise.

III.

But still the elements o' sang
In formless jumble, right an' rang,
Wild floated in my brain:
'Till on that har'st I said before,
My partner in the merry core,
She rous'd the forming strain:
I see her yet, the sonsie quean,
That lighted up her jingle,
Her witching smile, her pauky e'en
That gart my heart-strings tingle:
I fired, inspired,
At every kindling keek,
But bashing, and dashing,
I feared aye to speak.*

. . . . . .

ON THE DEATH OF

SIR JAMES HUNTER BLAIR.

THE lamp of day, with ill-presaging glare,
Dim, cloudy, sunk beneath the western wave;
Th' inconstant blast howl'd thro' the darkening air,
And hollow whistled in the rocky cave.

Lone as I wander'd by each cliff and dell,
Once the loved haunts of Scotia's royal train;†
Or mused where limpid streams once hallow'd, well,‡
Or mould'ring ruins mark the sacred fane.§

Th' increasing blast roar'd round the beetling rocks,
The clouds, swift-wing'd, flew o'er the starry sky,
The groaning trees untimely shed their locks,
And shooting meteors caught the startled eye.

The paly moon rose in the livid east,
And 'mong the cliffs disclosed a stately form,
In weeds of woe that frantic beat her breast,
And mix'd her wailings with the raving storm.

Wild to my heart the filial pulses glow,
'Twas Caledonia's trophied shield I view'd;
Her form majestic droop'd in pensive woe,
The lightning of her eye in tears imbued.

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* The reader will find some explanation of this poem in p. viii.
† The King's Park at Holyrood-house.
‡ St. Anthony's Well.
§ St. Anthony's Chapel.

Reversed that spear, redoubtable in war,
Reclined that banner, erst in fields unfurl'd,
That like a deathful meteor gleam'd afar,
And braved the mighty monarchs of the world.—

"My patriot son fills an untimely grave!"
With accents wild and lifted arms she cried;
"Low lies the hand that oft was stretch'd to save,
Low lies the heart that swell'd with honest pride!

"A weeping country joins a widow's tear,
The helpless poor mix with the orphan's cry;
The drooping arts around their patron's bier,
And grateful science heaves the heartfelt sigh.

"I saw my sons resume their ancient fire;
I saw fair Freedom's blossoms richly blow!
But, ah! how hope is born but to expire!
Relentless fate has laid the guardian low.—

"My patriot falls, but shall he lie unsung,
While empty greatness saves a worthless name!
No; every Muse shall join her tuneful tongue,
And future ages hear his growing fame.

"And I will join a mother's tender cares,
Thro' future times to make his virtues last,
That distant years may boast of other Blairs"—
She said, and vanish'd with the sweeping blast.

WRITTEN

ON THE BLANK LEAF OF A COPY OF THE POEMS, PRESENTED TO AN OLD SWEETHEART, THEN MARRIED.*

ONCE fondly lov'd, and still remember'd dear,
Sweet early object of my youthful vows,
Accept this mark of friendship, warm, sincere,
Friendship! 'tis all cold duty now allows.—

And when you read the simple artless rhymes,
One friendly sigh for him, he asks no more,
Who distant burns in flaming torrid climes,
Or haply lies beneath th' Atlantic roar.

THE JOLLY BEGGARS:

A CANTATA.

RECITATIVO.

WHEN lyart leaves bestrow the yird,
Or wavering like the Bauckie-bird,†
Bedim cauld Boreas' blast;
When hailstanes drive wi' bitter skyte,
And infant frosts begin to bite,
In hoary cranreuch drest;
Ae night at e'en a merry core,
O' randie, gangrel bodies,
In Poosie-Nansie's held the splore,
To drink their orra duddies:
Wi' quaffing and laughing,
They ranted and they sang;
Wi' jumping and thumping,
The very girdle rang.

First, niest the fire, in auld red rags,
Ane sat, weel brac'd wi' mealy bags,
And knapsack a' in order;
His doxy lay within his arm,
Wi' usquebae an' blankets warm—
She blinket on her sodger:
An' aye he gies the tousie drab
The tither skelpin' kiss,
While she held up her greedy gab
Just like an a'mous dish.
Ilk smack did crack still,
Just like a cadger's whip,
Then staggering and swaggering
He roar'd this ditty up—

AIR.

Tune—"Soldier's Joy."

I.

I AM a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

II.

My 'prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;
I served out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

III.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter my stumps at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

IV.

And now tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,

* The girl mentioned in the letter to Dr. Moore.
† The old Scotch name for the Bat.

I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my callet,
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

V.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the Winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks often times for a home,
When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell, at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

RECITATIVO.

He ended; and the kebars sheuk,
Aboon the chorus roar;
While frighted rattans backward leuk,
And seek the benmost bore;
A fairy fiddler frae the neuk,
He skirl'd out encore!
But up arose the martial chuck,
And laid the loud uproar.

AIR.

Tune—"Soldier Laddie."

I ONCE was a maid, tho' I cannot tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie,
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

II.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

III.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church,
He ventur'd the *soul*, and I risked the *body*,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

IV.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

V.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at Cunningham fair;
His *rag regimental* they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

VI.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Then niest outspak a raucle carlin,
Wha kent sae weel to cleek the sterling,
For monie a pursie she had hooked,
And had in mony a well been ducked.
Her dove had been a Highland laddie,
But weary fa' the waefu' woodie!
Wi' sighs and sobs she thus began
To wail her braw John Highlandman.

AIR.

Tune—"O an' ye were dead, Gudeman."

I.

A HIGHLAND lad my love was born,
The Lalland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithfu' to his clan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.

CHORUS.

Sing, hey my braw John Highlandman!
Sing, ho my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a lad in a' the lan'
Was match for my John Highlandman.

II.

With his philibeg an' tartan plaid,
An' gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

III.

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
An' liv'd like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lalland face he feared none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

IV.

They banish'd him beyond the sea,
But ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

V.

But, oh! they catch'd him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;

My curse upon them every one,
They've hang'd my braw John Higlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

VI.

And now a widow, I must mourn
The pleasures that will ne'er return;
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing, hey, &c.

RECITATIVO.

A pigmy scraper, wi' his fiddle,
Wha us'd at trysts and fairs to driddle,
Her strappin limb and gausy middle
He reach'd nae higher,
Had hol'd his heartie like a riddle,
An' blawn't on fire.

Wi' hand on haunch, an' upward e'e,
He croon'd his gamut, one, two, three,
Then in an Arioso key,
The wee Apollo
Set off wi' *Allegretto* glee
His giga solo.

AIR.

Tune—"Whistle owre the lave o't."

I.

Let me ryke up to dight that tear,
An' go wi me to be my dear,
An' then your every care and fear
May whistle owre the lave o't.

CHORUS.

I am a fiddler to my trade,
An' a' the tunes that e'er I play'd,
The sweetest still to wife or maid,
Was whistle owre the lave o't.

II.

At kirns and weddings we'se be there,
An' O! sae nicely's we will fare;
We'll bouse about till Daddie Care
Sings whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

III.

Sae merrily the banes we'll pyke,
An' sun oursels about the dyke,
An' at our leisure, when we like,
We'll whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

IV.

But bless me wi' your heaven o' charms,
And while I kittle hair on thairms,
Hunger, cauld, an a sick harms,
May whistle owre the lave o't.
I am, &c.

RECITATIVO.

Her charms had struck a sturdy Caird,
As weel as poor Gutscraper;
He taks the fiddler by the beard,
And draws a rusty rapier—
He swoor by a' was swearing worth,
To speet him like a pliver,
Unless he would from that time forth,
Relinquish her for ever.

Wi' ghastly e'e, poor tweedle dee
Upon his hunkers bended,
And pray'd for grace wi' ruefu' face,
And sae the quarrel ended.
But though his little heart did grieve,
When round the tinkler prest her,
He feign'd to snirtle in his sleeve,
When thus the caird address'd her.

AIR.

Tune—"Clout the Caldron."

I.

My bonnie lass, I work in brass,
A tinkler is my station;
I've travell'd round all Christian ground
In this my occupation.
I've ta'en the gold, I've been enroll'd
In many a noble squadron:
But vain they search'd, when off I march'd
To go and clout the cauldron.
I've ta'en the gold, &c,

II.

Despise that shrimp, that wither'd imp,
Wi' a his noise an' caprin',
An' tak' a share wi' those that bear
The *budget* an' the *apron*.
An' *by* that stowp, my faith and houp,
An' *by* that dear Keilbagie,*
If e'er ye want, or meet wi' scant,
May I ne'er weet my craigie.
An' by that stowp, &c.

RECITATIVO.

The caird prevail'd—the unblushing fair
In his embraces sunk,
Partly wi' love o'ercome sae sair,
An' partly she was drunk.
Sir Violino, with an air
That show'd a man of spunk,
Wish'd *unison* between the pair,
An' made the bottle clunk
To their health that night.

But hurchin Cupid shot a shaft
That play'd a dame a shavie,
The fiddler rak'd her fore an aft,
Behint the chicken cavie.
Her lord, a wight o' Homer's * craft,
Tho' limping with the spavie,

* A peculiar sort of whisky so called, a great favourite with Poosie-Nancie's clubs.

* Homer is allowed to be the oldest balled-singer on record.

He hirpl'd up, and lap like daft,
An' shor'd them Daintie Davie
O boot that night.

He was a care-defying blade
As ever Bacchus listed,
Though Fortune sair upon him laid,
His heart she ever miss'd it.
He had no wish but—to be glad,
Nor want but—when he thirsted;
He hated nought but—to be sad,
And thus the Muse suggested,
His sang that night.

AIR.

Tune—" For a' that, an' a' that."

I.

I AM a bard of no regard,
Wi' gentle folks, an' a' that;
But *Homer-like*, the glowran byke,
Frae town to town I draw that.

CHORUS.

For a' that, an' a that;
An' twice as meikle's a' that;
I've lost but ane, I've twa behin',
I've wife enough for a' that.

II.

I never drank the Muse's stank,
Castalia's burn, an' a' that;
But there it streams, and richly reams,
My *Helicon* I ca' that.
For a' that, &c.

III.

Great love I bear to a' the fair,
Their humble slave, an' a' that;
But lordly will, I hold it still
A mortal sin to thraw that.
For a' that, &c.

IV.

In raptures sweet, this hour we meet,
Wi' mutual love an' a' that;
But for how lang the *flie may stang*,
Let *inclination* law that.
For a' that, &c.

V.

Their tricks and craft have put me daft,
They've ta'en me in, an' a' that;
But clear your decks, and here's the *sex!*
I like the jads for a' that.

" For a' that, an' a' that,
An' twice as meikle's a' that;
My dearest bluid, to do them guid,
They're welcome till't for a' that.

RECITATIVO.

So sung the bard—and Nansie's wa's
Shook with a thunder of applause,
Re-echo'd from each mouth;
They toom'd their pocks, an' pawn'd their duds,
They scarcely left to co'er their fuds,
To quench their lowan drouth.

Then owre again, the jovial thrang,
The poet did request,
To loose his pack an' wale a sang,
A ballad o' the best:
He rising, rejoicing,
Between his twa *Deborahs*,
Looks round him, an' found them
Impatient for the chorus.

AIR.

Tune—" Jolly Mortals fill your Glasses."

I.

See! the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing.

CHORUS.

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

II.

What is title? what is treasure?
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter *how* or *where!*
A fig, &c.

III.

With the ready trick and fable,
Round we wander all the day;
And at night, in barn or stable,
Hug our doxies on the hay.
A fig, &c.

IV.

Does the train-attended *carriage*
Through the country lighter rove?
Does the sober bed of marriage
Witness brighter scenes of love?
A fig, &c.

V.

Life is all a *variorum*,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about *decorum*
Who have characters to lose.
A fig, &c.

VI.

Here's to the budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all the wandering train!
Here's our ragged *brats and callets!*
One and all cry out, Amen!

A fig for those by law protected!
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

THE KIRK'S ALARM: *

A SATIRE.

Orthodox, orthodox, wha believe in John Knox,
Let me sound an alarm to your conscience;
There's a heretic blast has been blawn in the wast,
That what is no sense must be nonsense.

Dr. Mac, † Dr. Mac, you should stretch on a rack,
To strike evil doers wi' terror;
To join faith and sense upon ony pretence,
Is heretic, damnable error.

Town of Ayr, town of Ayr, it was mad, I declare,
To meddle wi' mischief a-brewing;
Provost John is still deaf to the church's relief,
And orator Bob ‡ is its ruin.

D'rymple mild, § D'rymple mild, tho' your heart's like a child,
And your life like the new driven snaw,
Yet that winna save ye, auld Satan must have ye,
For preaching that three's ane an' twa.

Rumble John, ¶ Rumble John, mount the steps wi' a groan,
Cry the book is wi' heresy cramm'd;
Then lug out your ladle, deal brimstone like adle,
And roar every note of the damn'd.

Simper James, || Simper James, leave the fair Killie dames,
There's a holier chace in your view;
I'll lay on your head, that the pack ye'll soon lead,
For puppies like you there's but few.

Singet Sawney, ** Singet Sawney, are ye herding the penny,
Unconscious what evils await;
Wi' a jump, yell, and howl, alarm every soul,
For the foul thief is just at your gate.

Daddy Auld, †† Daddy Auld, there's a tod in the fauld,
A tod meikle waur than the clerk;
Tho' ye can do little skaith, ye'll be in at the death,
And if ye canna bite ye may bark.

Davie Bluster, * Davie Bluster, if for a saint ye do muster,
The corps is no nice of recruits;
Yet to worth lets be just, royal blood ye might boast,
If the ass was the king of the brutes.

Jamie Goose, † Jamie Goose, ye ha'e made but toom roose,
In hunting the wicked lieutenant;
But the Doctor's your mark, for the L—d's haly ark;
He has cooper'd and cawd a wrang pin in't.

Poet Willie, ‡ Poet Willie, gie the Doctor a volley,
Wi' your liberty's chain and your wit;
O'er Pegasus' side ye ne'er laid a stride,
Ye but smelt, man, the place where he sh-t.

Andro Gouk, ¶ Andro Gouk, ye may slander the book,
And the book not the waur let me tell ye;
Ye are rich, and look big, but lay by hat and wig,
And ye'll hae a calf's head o' sma' value.

Barr Steenie, || Barr Steenie, what mean ye? what mean ye?
If ye'll meddle nae mair wi' the matter,
Ye may ha'e some pretence to havins and sense,
Wi' people wha ken ye nae better.

Irvine side, ** Irvine side, wi' your turkey-cock pride,
Of manhood but sma' is your share;
Ye've the figure, 'tis true, even your faes will allow,
And your friends they dare grant you nae mair.

Muirland Jock, †† Muirland Jock, when the L—d makes a rock
To crush Common Sense for her sins,
If ill manners were wit, there's no mortal so fit
To confound the poor Doctor at ance.

Holy Will, ‡‡ Holy Will, there was wit i' your skull,
When ye pilfer'd the alms o' the poor;
The timmer is scant, when ye're ta'en for a saint,
Wha should swing in a rape for an hour.

Calvin's sons, Calvin's sons, seize your sp'ritual guns,
Ammunition ye never can need;
Your hearts are the stuff, will be powther enough,
And your skulls are storehouses o' lead.

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* This poem was written a short time after the publication of Mr. M'Gill's Essay.
† Mr. M'——ll. ‡ R——t A——n.
§ Dr. D——e. ¶ Mr. R——ll.
|| Mr. M'——y. ** Mr. M——y.
†† Mr. A——d.

* Mr. G——, O——e. † Mr. Y——g, C——k.
‡ Mr. P——s, A-r. ¶ Dr. A. M——ll.
|| Mr. S—— Y——, B—r. ** Mr. S——h, G——n.
†† Mr. S——d. ‡‡ An E——r in M——c.

Poet Burns, Poet Burns, wi' your priest-skelping turns,
Why desert ye your auld native shire;
Your muse is a gipsie, e'en tho' she were tipsie,
She could ca' us nae waur than we are.

THE TWA HERDS.*

O a' ye pious godly flocks,
Weel fed on pasture's orthodox,
Wha now will keep you frae the fox,
Or worrying tykes,
Or wha will tent the waifs and crocks,
About the dykes?

The twa best herds in a' the wast,
That e'er ga'e gospel horn a blast,
These five-and-twenty simmers past,
O! dool to tell,
Ha'e had a bitter black out-cast
Atween themsel.

O, M——y, man, and worthy R——ll,
How could you raise so vile a bustle,
Ye'll see how new-light herds will whistle,
An' think it fine!
The Lord's cause ne'er gat sic a twistle,
Sin' I ha'e min'.

O, Sirs! whae'er wad hae expeckit,
Your duty ye wad sae negleckit,
Ye wha were ne'er by laird respeckit,
To wear the plaid,
But by the brutes themselves eleckit,
To be their guide.

What flock wi' M——y's flock could rank,
Sae hale and hearty every shank,
Nae poison'd soor Arminian stank,
He let them taste,
Frae Calvin's well, aye clear they drank,
O sic a feast!

The thummart, wil'-cat, brock, and tod,
Weel kend his voice thro' a' the wood,
He smelt their ilka hole and road,
Baith out and in,
And weel he lik'd to shed their bluid,
And sell their skin.

What herd like R——ll tell'd his tale,
His voice was heard thro' muir and dale,
He kend the Lord's sheep, ilka tail,
O'er a' the height,
And saw gin they were sick or hale,
At the first sight.

He fine a mangy sheep could scrub,
Or nobly fling the gospel club,
And new-light herds could nicely drub,
Or pay their skin;
Could shake them o'er the burning dub,
Or heave them in.

Sic twa—O! do I live to see't,
Sic famous twa should disagreet,
An' names, like villain, hypocrite,
Ilk ither gi'en,
While new-light herds wi' laughin' spite,
Say neither's liein'!

A' ye wha tent the gospel fauld,
There's D——n, deep, and P——s, shaul,
But chiefly thou, apostle A—d
We trust in thee,
That thou wilt work them, hot and cauld,
Till they agree.

Consider, Sirs, how we're beset,
There's scarce a new herd that we get,
But comes frae 'mang that cursed set,
I winna name,
I hope frae heav'n to see them yet
In fiery flame.

D——e has been lang our fae,
M'——ll has wraught us meikle wae,
And that curs'd rascal ca'd M'——e,
And baith the S——s,
That aft ha'e made us black and blae,
Wi' vengefu' paws.

Auld W——w lang has hatch'd mischief,
We thought aye death wad bring relief,
But he has gotten, to our grief,
Ane to succeed him,
A chield wha'll soundly buff our beef;
I meikle dread him.

And mony a ane that I could tell,
Wha fain would openly rebel,
Forby turn-coats amang oursel,
There S—h for ane,
I doubt he's but a grey-nick quill,
And that ye'll fin'.

O! a' ye flocks o'er a' the hills,
By mosses, meadows, moors, and fells,
Come join your counsel and your skills,
To cow the lairds,
And get the brutes the power themsels,
To choose their herds.

Then Orthodoxy yet may prance,
And learning in a woody dance,
And that fell cur ca'd Common Sense,
That bites sae sair,
Be banish'd o'er the sea to France:
Let him bark there.

Then Shaw's and Dalrymple's eloquence,
M'——ll's close nervous excellence,

* This piece was among the first of our Author's productions which he submitted to the public; and was occasioned by a dispute between two clergymen, near Kilmarnock.

M'Q—e's pathetic manly sense,
And guid M'——h,
Wi' S—th, wha thro' the heart can glance,
May a' pack aff.

THE HENPECK'D HUSBAND.

Curs'd be the man, the poorest wretch in life,
The crouching vassal to the tyrant wife,
Who has no will but by her high permission;
Who has not sixpence but in her possession;
Who must to her his dear friend's secret tell;
Who dreads a curtain lecture worse than hell.
Were such the wife had fallen to my part,
I'd break her spirit, or I'd break her heart;
I'd charm her with the magic of a switch,
I'd kiss her maids, and kick the perverse b—h.

ELEGY ON THE YEAR 1788.

For lords or kings I dinna mourn,
E'en let them die—for that they're born!
But, oh, prodigious to reflect,
A *Towmont*, Sirs, is gane to wreck!
O *Eighty-eight*, in thy sma' space
What dire events ha'e taken place!
Of what enjoyments thou hast reft us!
In what a pickle thou hast left us!

The Spanish empire's tint ahead,
An' my auld teethless Bawtie's dead;
The toolzie's teugh 'tween Pitt an' Fox,
An' our guidwife's wee birdy cocks;
The tane is game, a bluidy devil,
But to the *hen-birds* unco civil;
The tither's dour, has nae sic breedin',
But better stuff ne'er claw'd a midden!

Ye ministers, come mount the pulpit,
An' cry till ye be hearse an' rupit;
For *Eighty-eight* he wish'd you weel,
An' gied you a' baith gear an' meal;
E'en mony a plack, an' mony a peck,
Ye ken yoursels, for little feck!

Ye bonnie lasses dight your een,
For some o' you hae tint a frien':
In *Eighty-eight*, ye ken, was ta'en
What ye'll ne'er hae to gi'e again.

Observe the very nowt an' sheep,
How dowff an' dowie now they creep;
Nay, even the yirth itsel' does cry,
For Embro' wells are grutten dry.

O *Eighty-nine* thou's but a bairn,
An' no owre auld, I hope, to learn!
Thou beardless boy, I pray tak' care,
Thou now has got thy daddy's chair,
Nae hand-cuff'd, mizzl'd, haff-shackl'd *Regent*,
But, like himsel', a full free agent.
Be sure ye follow out the plan
Nae wanr than he did, honest man!
As meikle better as you can.

January 1, 1789.

VERSES

WRITTEN ON A WINDOW OF THE INN AT CARRON.

We cam na here to view your warks
In hopes to be mair wise,
But only, lest we gang to hell,
It may be nae surprise:
But when we tirl'd at your door,
Your porter dought na hear us;
Sae may, should we to hell's yetts come,
Your billy Satan sair us!

LINES WRITTEN BY BURNS,

WHILE ON HIS DEATH-BED, TO J—N R—K—N, AYRSHIRE, AND FORWARDED TO HIM IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE POET'S DEATH.

He who of R—k—n sang, lies stiff and dead,
And a green grassy hillock hides his head;
Alas! alas! a devilish change indeed!

At a meeting of the Dumfries-shire Volunteers, held to commemorate the anniversary of Rodney's victory, April 12th 1782, Burns was called upon for a Song, instead of which he delivered the following Lines:

Instead of a song, boys, I'll give you a toast,
Here's the memory of those on the twelfth that we lost;—
That we lost, did I say, nay, by heav'n! that we found,
For their fame it shall last while the world goes round.
The next in succession, I'll give you the King,
Whoe'er would betray him on high may he swing;
And here's the grand fabric, our free Constitution,
As built on the base of the great Revolution;
And longer with Politics not to be cramm'd,
Be Anarchy curs'd, and be Tyranny damn'd;
And who would to Liberty e'er prove disloyal,
May his son be a hangman, and he his first trial.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

Holy Willie was a William Fisher, a ruling elder. He was a maltster by business, and as he sold his malt to alehouses and tavern-keepers, who made their own liquor, when he called round for his money, it was a matter of course that he should sometimes drink with his customers. By this means, he is said, sometimes to have been surprised into a glass too much, and when this was the case, he was supposed to be somewhat amorously inclined. It is a piece of satire, more exquisitely severe than any Burns afterwards wrote. Something, however, is to be allowed to the nature of the subject, and something to the education of the poet, and if, from veneration to the names of Swift and Dryden, we tolerate the grossness of the one and the indelicacy of the other—the respect due to that of Burns, may surely claim indulgence for a few light strokes of broad humour.—CHAPMAN.

HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER.

O THOU, wha in the heavens dost dwell,
Wha, as it pleases best thysel',
Sends ane to heaven and ten to hell,
A' for thy glory,
And no for ony guid or ill
They've done afore thee!

I bless and praise thy matchless might,
Whan thousands thou has left in night,
That I am here afore thy sight,
For gifts an' grace,
A burnin' an' a shinin' light,
To a' this place.

What was I, or my generation,
That I should get such exaltation,
I wha deserve sic just damnation,
For broken laws,
Five thousand years' fore my creation,
Thro' Adam's cause.

When frae my mither's womb I fell,
Thou might hae plunged me in hell,
To gnash my gums, to weep and wail,
In burnin' lake,
Whar d—n—d devils roar and yell,
Chain'd to a stake.

Yet I am here a chosen sample,
To show thy grace is great an' ample;
I'm here a pillar in thy temple,
Strong as a rock,
A guide, a buckler, an' example,
To a' thy flock.

O L—d thou kens what zeal I bear,
When drinkers drink, and swearers swear,
And singing here, and dancing there,
W' great and sma';
For I am keepit by thy fear,
Free from them a'.

But yet, O L—d! confess I must,
At times I'm fash'd wi' fleshly lust,
An' sometimes too, wi' warldly trust
Vile self gets in;
But thou remembers we are dust,
Defil'd in sin.

O L—d! yestreen, thou kens, wi' Meg,
Thy pardon I sincerely beg,
May it ne'er be a livin' plague,
To my dishonour,
An' I'll ne'er lift a lawless l—g
Again upon her.

Besides, I farther maun allow,
Wi' Lizie's lass, three times I trow:
But, L—d that Friday I was fou',
When I came near her,
Or else, thou kens, thy *servant true*
Wad ne'er hae steer'd her.

Maybe thou lets this *fleshly thorn*,
Beset thy servant e'en and morn,
Lest he owre high and proud shou'd turn,
'Cause he's sae *gifted;*
If sae, thy han' maun e'en be borne,
Until thou lift it.

L—d bless thy chosen in this place,
For *here* thou hast a *chosen race;*
But G—d confound their stubborn face,
And blast their name,
Wha bring thy elders to disgrace,
And public shame.

L—d mind Gaun Hamilton's deserts,
He drinks, an' swears, an' plays at carts,
Yet has sae mony takin' arts,
Wi' grit an' sma',
Frae G—d's ane priest the people's hearts
He steals awa'.

An' whan we chasten'd him therefore,
Thou kens how he bred sic a splore,
As set the warld in a roar
O' laughin' at us;
Curse thou his basket and his store,
Kail an' potatoes.

L—d hear my earnest cry and pray'r,
Against that presbyt'ry o' Ayr;
Thy strong right hand, L—d make it bare,
Upo' their heads,
L—d weigh it down, and dinna spare,
For their misdeeds.

O L—d my G—d, that glib-tongu'd Aiken,
My very heart an' saul are quakin',
To think how we stood sweatin,' shakin',
An' pi—d wi' dread,
While he wi' hingin' lips and snakin',
Held up his head.

L—d in the day of vengeance try him.
L—d visit them wha did employ him,
And pass not in thy mercy by 'em,
Nor hear their pray'r;
But for thy people's sake destroy 'em
And dinna spare.

But L—d remember me and mine,
Wi' mercies temp'ral and divine,
That I for gear and grace may shine,
Excell'd by nane;
An' a' the glory shall be thine,
Amen, amen!

STRATHALLAN'S LAMENT.

THICKEST night o'erhangs my dwelling!
Howling tempests o'er me rave!
Turbid torrents, wintry swelling,
Still surround my lonely cave!

Crystal streamlets gently flowing,
Busy haunts of base mankind,
Western breezes, softly blowing,
Suit not my distracted mind.

In the cause of right engaged,
Wrongs injurious to redress,
Honour's war we strongly waged,
But the heavens deny'd success.

Ruin's wheel has driven o'er us,
Not a hope that dare attend,
The wide world is all before us—
But a world without a friend!*

CLARINDA.

CLARINDA, mistress of my soul,
The measur'd time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole,
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie;
Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy.

We part,—but by these precious drops,
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps,
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day:
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

A VISION.

As I stood by yon roofless tower,
Where the wa'-flower scents the dewy air,
Where th' howlet mourns in her ivy bower,
And tells the midnight moon her care.

The winds were laid, the air was still,
The stars they shot alang the sky;
The fox was howling on the hill,
And the distant echoing glens reply.

The stream adown its hazelly path,
Was rushing by the ruin'd wa's,
Hasting to join the sweeping Nith,*
Whase distant roaring swells and fa's.

The cauld blue north was streaming forth
Her lights, wi' hissing eerie din;
Athort the lift they start and shift,
Like fortune's favours, tint as win.

By heedless chance I turn'd mine eyes,†
And, by the moon-beam, shook, to see
A stern and stalwart ghaist arise,
Attir'd as minstrels wont to be.

Had I a statue been o' stane,
His darin look had daunted me;
And on his bonnet grav'd was plain,
The sacred posie—Liberty!

And frae his harp sic strains did flow,
Might roused the slumb'ring dead to hear;
But oh, it was a tale of woe,
As ever met a Briton's ear!

He sang wi' joy his former day,
He weeping wail'd his latter times;
But what he said it was nae play,
I winna ventur't in my rhymes.‡

COPY OF A POETICAL ADDRESS

TO

MR. WILLIAM TYTLER,

WITH THE PRESENT OF THE BARD'S PICTURE.

REVERED defender of beauteous Stuart,
Of Stuart, a name once respected,
A name, which to love was the mark of a true heart,
But now 'tis despised and neglected:

---

* Strathallan, it is presumed, was one of the followers of the young Chevalier, and is supposed to be lying concealed in some cave of the Highlands, after the battle of Culloden. This song was written before the year 1788.

* *Variation.* To join you river on the Strath.

† *Variation.* Now looking over firth and fauld,
Her horn the pale-faced Cynthia rear'd;
When, lo, in form of minstrel auld,
A stern and stalwart ghaist appear'd.

‡ This poem, an imperfect copy of which was printed in Johnson's Museum, is here given from the poet's MS. with his last corrections. The scenery so finely described is taken from nature. The poet is supposed to be musing by night on the banks of the river Cluden, and by the ruins of Lincluden-Abbey, founded in the twelfth century, in the reign of Malcom IV. of whose present situation the reader may find some account in Pennant's Tour in Scotland, or Grose's Antiquities of that division of the island. Such a time and such a place are well fitted for holding converse with aerial beings. Though this poem has a political bias, yet it may be presumed that no reader of taste, whatever his opinions may be, would forgive it being omitted. Our poet's prudence suppressed the song of *Liberty*, perhaps fortunately for his reputation. It may be questioned whether, even in the resources of his genius, a strain of poetry could have been found worthy of the grandeur and solemnity of this preparation.

Tho' something like moisture conglobes in my eye,
Let no one misdeem me disloyal;
A poor friendless wand'rer may well claim a sigh,
Still more, if that wand'rer were royal.

My fathers, that name have rever'd on a throne;
My fathers have fallen to right it;
Those fathers would spurn their degenerate son,
That name should he scoffingly slight it.

Still in prayers for King George I most heartily join,
The Queen and the rest of the gentry,
Be they wise, be they foolish, is nothing of mine;
Their title's avow'd by the country.

But why of that epocha make such a fuss,
. . . . . .
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

But loyalty, truce! we're on dangerous ground,
Who knows how the fashions may alter,
The doctrine, to-day, that is loyalty sound,
To-morrow may bring us a halter.

I send you a trifle, a head of a bard,
A trifle scarce worthy your care;
But accept it, good Sir, as a mark of regard,
Sincere as a saint's dying prayer.

Now life's chilly evening dim shades on your eye,
And ushers the long dreary night:
But you, like the star that athwart gilds the sky,
Your course to the latest is bright.

My muse jilted me here, and turned a corner on me, and I have not got again into her good graces. Do me the justice to believe me sincere in my grateful remembrance of the many civilities you have honoured me with since I came to Edinburgh, and in assuring you that I have the honour to be,

Revered Sir,
Your obliged and very humble Servant,
R. BURNS.

EDINBURGH, 1787.

THE FOLLOWING POEM

WAS WRITTEN TO A GENTLEMAN WHO HAD SENT HIM A NEWSPAPER, AND OFFERED TO CONTINUE IT FREE OF EXPENSE.

KIND sir, I've read your paper through,
And faith, to me, 'twas really new!
How guessed ye, sir, what maist I wanted?
This mony a day I've grain'd and gaunted,
To ken what French mischief was brewin';
Or what the drumlie Dutch were doin';
That vile doup skelper, Emperor Joseph,
If Venus yet had got his nose off;
Or how the collieshankie works
Atween the Russian and the Turks;
Or if the Swede, before he halt,
Would play anither Charles the Twalt!
If Denmark, ony body spak o't;
Or Poland, wha had now the tack o't;
How cut-throat Prussian blades were hingin
How libbet Italy was singin;
If Spaniard, Portuguese, or Swiss,
Were saying or takin ought amiss:
Or how our merry lads at hame,
In Britain's court kept up the game:
How royal George, the Lord leuk o'er him!
Was managing St. Stephen's quorum;
If sleekit Chatham Will was livin,
Or glaikit Charlie got his nieve in;
How daddie Burke the plea was cookin,
If Warren Hastings' neck was yeukin;
How cesses, stents, and fees were raxed,
Or if bare a— yet were taxed;
The news o' princes, dukes, and earls,
Pimps, sharpers, bawds, and opera-girls;
If that daft Buckie, Geordie Wales,
Was threshin still at hizzies' tails,
Or if he was growin oughtlins douser,
And no a perfect kintra cooser.—
A' this and mair I never heard of;
And, but for you, I might despair'd of.
So gratefu', back your news I send you,
And pray, a' guid things may attend you!

ELLISLAND, Monday Morning, 1790.

POEM.

ON PASTORAL POETRY.

HAIL Poesie! thou nymph reserved!
In chase o' thee, what crowds hae swerved
Frae common sense, or sunk enerved
'Mang heaps o' clavers;
And och! o'er aft thy joes hae starved,
'Mid a' thy favours!

Say, Lassie, why thy train amang,
While loud the trump's heroic clang,
And sock or buskin skelp alang
To death or marriage;
Scarce ane has tried the shepherd-sang
But wi' miscarriage?

In Homer's craft Jock Milton thrives;
Eschylus' pen Will Shakespeare drives;
Wee Pope, the knurlin, 'till him rives
Horatian fame;
In thy sweet sang, Barbauld, survives
Even Sappho's flame.

But thee, Theocritus, wha matches?
They're no herd's ballats, Maro's catches;
Squire Pope but busks his skinlin patches
O' heathen tatters:
I pass by hunders, nameless wretches,
That ape their betters.

In this braw age o' wit an lear,
Will nane the Shepherd's whistle mair
Blaw sweetly in its native air
And rural grace;
And wi' the far-famed Grecian share
A rival place?

Yes! there is ane; a Scottish callan!
There's ane; come forrit, honest Allan!
Thou need na jouk behint the hallan,
A chiel so clever;
The teeth o' time may gnaw Tamtallan,
But thou's for ever.

Thou paints auld nature to the nines,
In thy sweet Caledonian lines;
Nae gowden stream thro' myrtles twines,
Where Philomel,
While nightly breezes sweep the vines,
Her griefs will tell!

In gowany glens thy burnie strays,
Where bonnie lassies bleach their claes;
Or trots by hazelly shaws or braes,
Wi' hawthorns gray,
Where blackbirds join the shepherd's lays
At close o' day.

Thy rural loves are nature's sel;
Nae bombast spates o' nonsense swell;
Nae snap conceits, but that sweet spell
O' witchin' love,
That charm that can the strongest quell,
The sternest move.

SKETCH.

NEW YEAR'S DAY.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

This day, Time winds th' exhausted chain,
To run the twelvemonths' length again:
I see the old bald-pated fellow,
With ardent eyes, complexion sallow,
Adjust the unimpair'd machine,
To wheel the equal, dull routine.

The absent lover, minor heir,
In vain assail him with their prayer.
Deaf as my friend he sees them press,
Nor makes the hour one moment less.
Will you (the Major's with the hounds,
The happy tenants share his rounds;
Coila's fair Rachel's care to-day,*
And blooming Keith's engaged with Gray);
From housewife cares a minute borrow—
—That grandchild's cap will do to-morrow—
And join with me a moralizing,
This day's propitious to be wise in.
First, what did yesternight deliver;
"Another year is gone for ever."
And what is this day's strong suggestion!
"The passing moment's all we rest on!"
Rest on—for what! What do we here?
Or why regard the passing year?
Will time, amus'd with proverb'd lore,
Add to our date one minute more?
A few days may—a few years must—
Repose us in the silent dust.
Then, is it wise to damp our bliss!
Yes, all such reasonings are amiss!
The voice of nature loudly cries,
And many a message from the skies,
That something in us never dies:
That on this frail, uncertain state,
Hang matters of eternal weight;
That future-life in worlds unknown
Must take its hue from this alone:
Whether as heavenly glory bright,
Or dark as misery's woeful night—
Since then, my honour'd first of friends,
On this poor being all depends:
Let us th' important *now* employ,
And live as those who never die.
Tho' you, with days and honours crown'd,
Witness that filial circle round,
(A sight life's sorrows to repulse,
A sight pale envy to convulse)
Others now claim your chief regard—
Yourself, you wait your bright reward.

* This young lady was drawing a picture of Coila from the Vision, see page 69.

EXTEMPORE,

ON THE LATE

MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE,*

AUTHOR OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF NATURAL HISTORY, AND MEMBER OF THE ANTIQUARIAN AND ROYAL SOCIETIES OF EDINBURGH.

To Crochallan came
The old cock'd hat, the grey surtout, the same;
His bristling beard just rising in its might,
'Twas four long nights and days to shaving night,
His uncombed grizzly locks wild-staring, thatch'd,
A head for thought profound and clear, unmatch'd;
Yet, tho' his caustic wit was biting, rude,
His heart was warm, benevolent and good.

* Mr. Smellie, and our poet, were both members of a club in Edinburgh, under the name of Crochallan Fencibles.

POETICAL INSCRIPTION

FOR

AN ALTAR TO INDEPENDENCE,

AT KERROUCHTRY, THE SEAT OF MR. HERON—WRITTEN IN SUMMER, 1795.

Thou of an independent mind,
With soul resolved, with soul resigned;
Prepared power's proudest frown to brave,
Who wilt not be, nor have a slave;
Virtue alone who dost revere,
Thy own reproach alone dost fear,
Approach this shrine, and worship here.

SONNET,

ON

THE DEATH OF MR. RIDDEL.

No more, ye warblers of the wood, no more,
Nor pour your descant grating on my ear:
Thou young-eyed Spring thy charms I cannot bear;
More welcome were to me grim Winter's wildest roar.

How can ye please, ye flowers, with all your dies?
Ye blow upon the sod that wraps my friend:
How can I to the tuneful strain attend?
That strain pours round th' untimely tomb where Riddel lies.*

Yes, pour, ye warblers, pour the notes of woe,
And soothe the Virtues weeping on this bier;
The Man of Worth, and has not left his peer,
Is in his 'narrow house' for ever darkly low.

Thee, Spring, again with joy shall others greet;
Me, mem'ry of my loss will only meet.

MONODY

ON

A LADY FAMED FOR HER CAPRICE.

How cold is that bosom which folly once fir'd,
How pale is that cheek where the rouge lately glisten'd:
How silent that tongue which the echoes oft tired,
How dull is that ear which to flattery so listened.

If sorrow and anguish their exit await,
From friendship and dearest affection removed;
How doubly severer, Eliza, thy fate,
Thou diedst unwept, as thou livedst unloved.

Loves, graces, and virtues, I call not on you;
So shy, grave, and distant, ye shed not a tear:
But come, all ye offspring of folly so true,
And flowers let us cull for Eliza's cold bier.

We'll search through the garden for each silly flower,
We'll roam through the forest for each idle weed;
But chiefly the nettle, so typical, shower,
For none e'er approach'd her but rued the rash deed.

We'll sculpture the marble, we'll measure the lay;
Here Vanity strums on her idiot lyre;
There keen indignation shall dart on her prey,
Which spurning contempt shall redeem from his ire.

THE EPITAPH.

Here lies, now a prey to insulting neglect,
What once was a butterfly gay in life's beam:
Want only of wisdom denied her respect,
Want only of goodness denied her esteem.

ANSWER TO A MANDATE

SENT BY THE SURVEYOR OF THE WINDOWS, CARRIAGES, &C. TO EACH FARMER, ORDERING HIM TO SEND A SIGNED LIST OF HIS HORSES, SERVANTS, WHEEL-CARRIAGES, &C. AND WHETHER HE WAS A MARRIED MAN OR A BACHELOR, AND WHAT CHILDREN THEY HAD.

Sir, as your mandate did request,
I send you here a faithfu' list,
My horses, servants, carts, and graith,
To which I'm free to tak my aith.
Imprimis, then, for carriage cattle,
I hae four brutes o' gallant mettle,
As ever drew before a pettle.
My *hand-afore*,* a guid auld has been,
And wight and wilfu' a' his days seen;
My *hand-a-hin*,† a guid brown filly,
Wha aft has borne me safe frae Killie;‡

* Robert Riddel, Esq. of Friar's Carse, a very worthy character, and one to whom our bard thought himself under many obligations.

* The fore-horse on the left-hand, in the plough.
† The hindmost on the left-hand, in the plough.
‡ Kilmarnock.

And your auld borough mony a time,
In days when riding was nae crime:
My *fur-a-hin*,* a guid, grey beast,
As e'er in tug or tow was traced:
The fourth, a Highland Donald hasty,
A d-mn'd red-wud, Kilburnie blastie.
For-by a cowte, of cowtes the wale,
As ever ran before a tail;
An' he be spared to be a beast,
He'll draw me fifteen pund at least.

Wheel carriages I hae but few,
Three carts, and twa are feckly new,
An auld wheel-barrow, mair for token,
Ae leg and baith the trams are broken;
I made a poker o' the spindle,
And my auld mither brunt the trundle.
For men, I've three mischievous boys,
Run-deils for rantin and for noise;
A gadsman ane, a thresher t'other,
Wee Davoc hauds the nowt in fother.
I rule them, as I ought, discreetly,
And often labour them completely,
And aye on Sundays duly nightly,
I on the questions tairge them tightly,
'Till, faith; wee Davoc's grown sae gleg,
(Tho' scarcely langer than my leg)
He'll screed you aff *effectual calling*,
As fast as ony in the dwalling.

I've nane in female servant station,
Lord keep me aye frae a' temptation!
I hae nae wife, and that my bliss is,
And ye hae laid nae tax on misses;
For weans I'm mair than weel contented,
Heaven sent me ane mair than I wanted:
My sonsie, smirking, dear-bought Bess,
She stares the daddie in her face,
Enough of ought ye like but grace.
But her, my bonny, sweet, wee lady,
I've said enough for her already,
And if ye tax her or her mither,
By the L—d ye'se get them a' thegither!

And now, remember, Mr. Aiken,
Nae kind of license out I'm taking.
Thro' dirt and dub for life I'll paidle,
Ere I sae dear pay for a saddle;
I've sturdy stumps, the Lord be thankit!
And a' my gates on foot I'll shank it.

This list wi' my ain hand I've wrote it,
The day and date as under notet;
Then know all ye whom it concerns,
Subscripsi huic,

ROBERT BURNS.

* The hindmost on the right-hand, in the plough.

IMPROMPTU,

ON MRS ———'S BIRTH-DAY,

4th November, 1793.

Old Winter with his frosty beard,
Thus once to Jove his prayer preferr'd;
"What have I done of all the year,
To bear this hated doom severe?
My cheerless sons no pleasure know;
Night's horrid car drags, dreary, slow:
My dismal months no joys are crowning,
But spleeny English hanging, drowning.

Now, Jove, for once be mighty civil;
To counterbalance all this evil;
Give me, and I've no more to say,
Give me Maria's natal day!
That brilliant gift will so enrich me,
Spring, Summer, Autumn cannot match me:"
"'Tis done!" says Jove; so ends my story,
And Winter once rejoiced in glory.

ADDRESS TO A LADY.

Oh wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea,
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee:
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch o' the globe,
Wi' thee to reign, wi' thee to reign;
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

TO A YOUNG LADY,

MISS JESSY L———, OF DUMFRIES;

WITH BOOKS WHICH THE BARD PRESENTED HER.

Thine be the volumes, Jessy fair,
And with them take the poet's prayer;
That fate may in her fairest page,
With every kindliest, best presage
Of future bliss, enrol thy name:
With native worth, and spotless fame,
And wakeful caution, still aware
Of ill—but chief, man's felon snare;
All blameless joys on earth we find,
And all the treasures of the mind—
These be thy guardian and reward;
So prays thy faithful friend, *the bard*.

SONNET,

WRITTEN ON THE 25TH JANUARY, 1793 THE BIRTH-DAY OF THE AUTHOR, ON HEARING A THRUSH SING IN A MORNING WALK.

Sing on, sweet thrush, upon the leafless bough,
Sing on, sweet bird, I listen to thy strain,
See aged Winter 'mid his surly reign,
At thy blythe carol clears his furrowed brow.

So in lone poverty's dominion drear,
Sits meek content with light unanxious heart,
Welcomes the rapid moments, bids them part,
Nor asks if they bring aught to hope or fear.

I thank thee, Author of this opening day!
Thou whose bright sun now gilds yon orient skies!
Riches denied, thy boon was purer joys,
What wealth could never give nor take away!

Yet come, thou child of poverty and care,
The mite high heaven bestowed, that mite with thee I'll share.

EXTEMPORE,

TO MR. S—E;

ON REFUSING TO DINE WITH HIM, AFTER HAVING BEEN PROMISED THE FIRST OF COMPANY, AND THE FIRST OF COOKERY, 17th DECEMBER, 1795.

No more of your guests, be they titled or not,
And cookery the first in the nation:
Who is proof to thy personal converse and wit,
Is proof to all other temptation.

TO MR. S—E.

WITH A PRESENT OF A DOZEN OF PORTER.

O had the malt thy strength of mind,
Or hops the flavour of thy wit;
'Twere drink for first of human kind,
A gift that e'en for S—e were fit.

JERUSALEM TAVERN, Dumfries.

POEM,

ADDRESSED TO MR. MITCHELL, COLLECTOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES, 1796.

Friend of the poet, tried and leal,
Wha, wanting thee, might beg or steal;
Alake, alake, the meikle deil,
Wi' a' his witches
Are at it, skelpin'! jig and reel,
In my poor pouches.

I, modestly, fu' fain wad hint it,
That one pound one, I sairly want it;
If wi' the lizzie down ye send it,
It would be kind;
And while my heart wi' life-blood dunted
I'd bear't in mind.

So may the auld year gang out moaning
To see the new come laden, groaning,
Wi' double plenty o'er the loaning
To thee and thine;
Domestic peace and comforts crowning
The hail design.

POSTSCRIPT.

Ye've heard this while how I've been licket,
And by fell death was nearly nicket:
Grim loon! he gat me by the fecket,
And sair me sheuk;
But, by guid luck, I lap a wicket,
And turn'd a neuk.

But by that health, I've got a share o't,
And by that life I'm promised mair o't,
My hale and weel I'll tak' a care o't
A tentier way:
Then farewell folly, hide and hair o't,
For ance and aye.

SENT TO A GENTLEMAN WHOM HE HAD OFFENDED.

The friend whom wild from wisdom's way,
The fumes of wine infuriate send;
(Not moony madness more astray)
Who but deplores that hapless friend?

Wine was th' insensate frenzied part,
Ah why should I such scenes outlive!
Scenes so abhorrent to my heart!
'Tis thine to pity and forgive.

POEM ON LIFE,

ADDRESSED TO COLONEL DE PEYSTER, DUMFRIES, 1796.

My honoured colonel, deep I feel
Your interest in the poet's weal;
Ah! how sma' heart hae I to speel
The steep Parnassus,
Surrounded thus by bolus pill,
And potion glasses.

O what a canty world were it,
Would pain and care, and sickness spare it:
And fortune, favour, worth, and merit,
As they deserve;
(And aye a' rowth, roast beef and claret;
Syne wha would starve)?

Dame life, tho' fiction out may trick her,
And in paste gems and frippery deck her;
Oh! flickering, feeble, and unsicker
I've found her still,
Aye wavering like the willow wicker,
'Tween good and ill.

Then that curst carmagnole, auld Satan,
Watches like baudrons by a rattan,
Our sinfu' saul to get a claut on
Wi' felon ire;
Syne, whip! his tail ye'll ne'er cast saut on,
He's aff like fire.

Ah Nick! ah Nick, it is na fair,
First showing us the tempting ware,
Bright wines and bonnie lasses rare,
To put us daft;
Syne weave unseen thy spider's snare
O hell's damn'd waft.

Poor man, the flie, aft bizzes by,
And aft as chance he comes thee nigh,
Thy auld damn'd elbow yeuks wi' joy,
And hellish pleasure;
Already in thy fancy's eye,
Thy sicker treasure.

Soon heels o'er gowdie! in he gangs,
And like a sheep-head on a tangs,
Thy girning laugh enjoys his pangs
And murdering wrestle,
As dangling in the wind he hangs
A gibbet's tassel

But lest you think I am uncivil,
To plague you with this draunting drivel,
Abjuring a' intentions evil,
I quat my pen;
The Lord preserve us frae the devil!
Amen! amen!

ADDRESS TO THE TOOTH-ACHE.

My curse upon your venom'd stang,
That shoots my tortur'd gums alang;
And thro' my lugs gies mony a twang,
Wi' gnawing vengeance;
Tearing my nerves wi' bitter pang,
Like racking engines!

When fevers burn, or ague freezes,
Rheumatics gnaw, or cholic squeezes;
Our neighbour's sympathy may ease us,
Wi' pitying moan;
But thee—thou hell o' a' diseases,
Aye mocks our groan!

Adown my beard the slavers trickle;
I throw the wee stools o'er the meikle,
As round the fire the giglets keckle,
To see me loup;
While raving mad, I wish a heckle
Were in their doup.

O' a' the num'rous human dools,
Ill har'sts, daft bargains, *cutty stools*,
Or worthy friends raked i' the mools,
Sad sight to see!
The tricks o' knaves or fash o' fools,
Thou bear'st the gree.

Where'er that place be, priests ca' hell,
Whence a' the tones o' mis'ry yell,
And ranked plagues their numbers tell,
In dreadfu' raw,
Thou, Tooth-ache, surely bear'st the bell,
Amang them a'!

O thou grim mischief-making chiel,
That gars the notes o' discord squeel,
'Till daft mankind aft dance a reel
In gore a shoe-thick;—
Gie a' the faes o' Scotland's weel
A towmond's Tooth-Ache.

TO ROBERT GRAHAM, Esq

OF FINTRY,

ON RECEIVING A FAVOUR.

I call no goddess to inspire my strains,
A fabled Muse may suit a bard that feigns;
Friend of my life! my ardent spirit burns,
And all the tribute of my heart returns,
For boons accorded, goodness ever new,
The gift still dearer as the giver you.

Thou orb of day! thou other paler light!
And all ye many sparkling stars of night;
If aught that giver from my mind efface;
If I that giver's bounty e'er disgrace;
Then roll to me, along your wandering spheres,
Only to number out a villain's years!

EPITAPH ON A FRIEND.

An honest man here lies at rest,
As e'er God with his image blest,
The friend of man, the friend of truth;
The friend of age, and guide of youth:
Few hearts like his, with virtue warm'd,
Few heads with knowledge so inform'd:
If there's another world, he lives in bliss;
If there is none, he made the best of this.

A GRACE BEFORE DINNER.

O Thou, who kindly dost provide
For ev'ry creature's want!
We bless thee, God of nature wide,
For all thy goodness lent;

And if it please thee, heavenly guide,
May never worse be sent;
But whether granted, or denied,
Lord bless us with content!
Amen!

TO MY DEAR AND MUCH HONOURED FRIEND,

MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP,

ON SENSIBILITY.

Sensibility how charming,
Thou, my friend, canst truly tell;
But distress, with horrors arming,
Thou hast also known too well!

Fairest flower, behold the lily,
Blooming in the sunny ray;
Let the blast sweep o'er the valley,
See it prostrate on the clay.

Hear the wood-lark charm the forest,
Telling o'er his little joys:
Hapless bird! a prey the surest,
To each pirate of the skies.

Dearly bought the hidden treasure,
Finer feelings can bestow:
Chords that vibrate sweetest pleasure,
Thrill the deepest notes of woe.

A VERSE,

COMPOSED AND REPEATED BY BURNS, TO THE MASTER OF THE HOUSE, ON TAKING LEAVE AT A PLACE IN THE HIGHLANDS WHERE HE HAD BEEN HOSPITABLY ENTERTAINED.

When death's dark stream I ferry o'er;
A time that surely shall come;
In heaven itself, I'll ask no more,
Than just a Highland welcome.

ADDITIONAL PIECES OF POETRY,

From the Reliques, *Published in* 1808,

BY MR. CROMEK.

[The contributions were poured so copiously upon Dr. Currie that selection became a duty, and he put aside several interesting pieces both in prose and verse, which would have done honour to the Poet's memory: But besides these there were other pieces extant, which did not come under the Doctor's notice: All of them, both of the rejected and discovered description, have since been collected and published by Mr. Cromek, whose personal devotion to the Poet, and generally to the poetry of his country, rendered him a most assiduous collector. The additional pieces of poetry so collected and published by Cromek, are given here. The additional songs and correspondence, taken from the Reliques and his more recent publication, "Select Scottish Songs," will each appear in the proper place.]

ELEGY

ON

MR. WILLIAM CREECH,

BOOKSELLER, EDINBURGH.

I.

Auld chuckie *Reekie's** sair distrest,
Down droops her ance weel burnish't crest,
Nae joy her bonie buskit nest
Can yield ava,
Her darling bird that she loe's best,
Willie's awa!

II.

O Willie was a witty wight,
And had o' things an unco' slight;
Auld Reekie ay he keepit tight,
And trig an' braw:
But now they'll busk her like a fright,
Willie's awa!

III.

The stiffest o' them a' he bow'd,
The bauldest o' them a' he cow'd;
They durst nae mair than he allow'd,
That was a law:
We've lost a birkie weel worth gowd,
Willie's awa!

* Edinburgh.

IV.

Now gawkies, tawpies, gowks and fools,
Frae colleges and boarding schools,
May sprout like simmer puddock-stools
In glen or shaw;
He wha could brush them down to mools
Willie's awa!

V.

The breth'ren o' the Commerce-Chaumer *
May mourn their loss wi' doolfu' clamour;
He was a dictionar and grammar
Amang them a';
I fear they'll now mak mony a stammer
Willie's awa!

VI.

Nae mair we see his levee door
Philosophers and Poets pour,†
And toothy critics by the score
In bloody raw!
The adjutant o' a' the core
Willie's awa!

VII.

Now worthy G——y's latin face,
T——r's and G———'s modest grace;
M'K——e, S——t, such a brace
As Rome ne'er saw;
They a' maun meet some ither place,
Willie's awa!

VIII.

Poor Burns—e'en Scotch drink canna quicken,
He cheeps like some bewildered chicken,
Scar'd frae it's minnie and the cleckin
By hoodie-craw;
Grief's gien his heart an unco kickin',
Willie's awa!

IX.

Now ev'ry sour-mon'd grinin' blellum,
And Calvin's fock, are fit to fell him;
And self-conceited critic skellum
His quill may draw;
He wha could brawlie ward their bellum
Willie's awa!

X.

Up wimpling stately Tweed I've sped,
And Eden scenes on crystal Jed,
And Ettrick banks now roaring red
While tempests blaw;
But every joy and pleasure's fled
Willie's awa!

XI.

May I be slander's common speech;
A text for infamy to preach;
And lastly, streckit out to bleach
In winter snaw;
When I forget thee! Willie Creech,
Tho' far awa!

XII.

May never wicked fortune touzle him!
May never wicked men bamboozle him!
Until a pow as auld's Methusalem!
He canty claw!
Then to the blessed, New Jerusalem
Fleet wing awa!

* The Chamber of Commerce of Edinburgh of which Mr. C. was Secretary.

† Many literary gentlemen were accustomed to meet at Mr. Creech's house at breakfast. Burns often met with them there, when he called, and hence the name of *Levee*.

ELEGY

ON

PEG NICHOLSON.*

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
As ever trode on airn;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And past the Mouth o' Cairn.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And rode thro' thick and thin;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
And wanting even the skin.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And ance she bore a priest;
But now she's floating down the Nith,
For Solway fish a feast.

Peg Nicholson was a good bay mare,
And the priest he rode her sair:
And much oppressed and bruised she was;
—As priest-rid cattle are, &c. &c.

* Margaret Nicholson, the maniac, whose visitations very much alarmed George the Third for his life. In naming their steeds, the poet and his friend Nicol seem to have had a preference, in the way of doing honour, of course, for the worthies who had used freedom with both priest and king.

ODE TO LIBERTY.

(*Imperfect*).

[In a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, the poet says:—The subject is Liberty: You know, my honoured friend how dear the theme is to me. I design it an irregular Ode for General Washington's birth-day. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms I come to Scotland thus]:

Thee, Caledonia, thy wild heaths among,
Thee, famed for martial deed and sacred song,
To thee I turn with swimming eyes;
Where is that soul of freedom fled?
Immingled with the mighty dead!
Beneath that hallowed turf where Wallace lies!

Hear it not, WALLACE, in thy bed of death!
Ye babbling winds, in silence sweep;
Disturb not ye the hero's sleep,
Nor give the coward secret breath.—
Is this the power in freedom's war
That wont to bid the battle rage?
Behold that eye which shot immortal hate,
Crushing the despot's proudest bearing,
That arm which, nerved with thundering fate,
Braved usurpation's boldest daring!
One quenched in darkness like the sinking star,
And one the palsied arm of tottering, powerless age.

A PRAYER—IN DISTRESS.

O THOU Great Being! what thou art
Surpasses me to know;
Yet sure I am, that known to thee
Are all thy works below.

Thy creature here before thee stands,
All wretched and distrest;
Yet sure those ills that wring my soul
Obey thy high behest.

Sure Thou, Almighty, canst not act
From cruelty or wrath;
O, free my weary eyes from tears,
Or close them fast in death!

But if I must afflicted be,
To suit some wise design;
Then man my soul with firm resolves
To bear and not repine!

A PRAYER,

WHEN FAINTING FITS, AND OTHER ALARMING SYMPTOMS OF A PLEURISY OR SOME OTHER DANGEROUS DISORDER, WHICH INDEED STILL THREATENS ME, FIRST PUT NATURE ON THE ALARM.

O THOU unknown, Almighty Cause
Of all my hope and fear!
In whose dread presence, ere an hour,
Perhaps I must appear.

If I have wander'd in those paths
Of life I ought to shun;
As *something*, loudly, in my breast,
Remonstrates I have done;

Thou know'st that Thou hast formed me
With passions wild and strong;
And list'ning to their witching voice
Has often led me wrong.

Where human *weakness* has come short,
Or *frailty* stept aside,
Do Thou, *All Good!* for such Thou art,
In shades of darkness hide.

Where with *intention* I have err'd,
No other plea I have,
But, *Thou art good;* and goodness still
Delighteth to forgive.

DESPONDENCY:

A HYMN.

WHY am I loth to leave this earthly scene!
Have I so found it full of pleasing charms!
Some drops of joy with draughts of ill between:
Some gleams of sunshine 'mid renewing storms:
Is it departing pangs my soul alarms?
Or death's unlovely, dreary, dark abode?
For guilt, for guilt, my terrors are in arms;
I tremble to approach an angry GOD,
And justly smart beneath his sin-avenging rod.

Fain would I say, 'Forgive my foul offence!'
Fain promise never more to disobey;
But, should my author health again dispense,
Again I might desert fair virtue's way;
Again in folly's path might go astray;
Again exalt the brute and sink the man;
Then how should I for heavenly mercy pray,
Who act so counter heavenly mercy's plan?
Who sin so oft have mourn'd yet to temptation ran?

O Thou, great governor of all below!
If I may dare a lifted eye to Thee,
Thy nod can make the tempest cease to blow,
Or still the tumult of the raging sea;
With that controling pow'r assist ev'n me,
Those headlong furious passions to confine;
For all unfit I feel my powers to be,
To rule their torrent in th' allowed line,
O, aid me with thy help, *Omnipotence Divine!*

LINES ON RELIGION.

"'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright;
'Tis *this*, that gilds the horror of our night!
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis *this* that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction, or repels its dart:
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies."

EPISTLES IN VERSE

TO J. LAPRAIK.

Sept. 13*th*, 1785.

Guid speed an' furder to you Johny,
Guid health, hale han's, an' weather bony;
Now when ye're nickan down fu' canny
The staff o' bread,
May ye ne'er want a stoup o' brany
To clear your head.

May Boreas never thresh your rigs,
Nor kick your rickles aff their legs,
Sendin' the stuff o'er muirs an' haggs
Like drivin' wrack;
But may the tapmast grain that wags
Come to the sack.

I'm bizzie too, an' skelpin' at it,
But bitter, daudin showers hae wat it,
Sae my auld stumpie pen I gat it
Wi' muckle wark,
An' took my jocteleg * an' whatt it,
Like ony clark.

It's now twa month that I'm your debtor,
For your braw, nameless, dateless letter,
Abusin' me for harsh ill nature
On holy men,
While deil a hair yoursel ye're better,
But mair profane.

But let the kirk-folk ring their bells,
Let's sing about our noble sels;
We'll cry nae jads frae heathen hills
To help, or roose us,
But browster wives † an' whisky stills,
They are the muses.

Your friendship Sir, I winna quat it,
An' if ye mak' objections at it,
Then han' in nieve some day we'll knot it,
An' witness take,
An' when wi' Usquabae we've wat it
It winna break.

But if the beast and branks be spar'd
Till kye be gaun without the herd,
An' a' the vittel in the yard,
An' theekit right,
I mean your ingle-side to guard
Ae winter night.

Then muse-inspirin' aqua-vitæ
Shall make us baith sae blythe an' witty,
Till ye forget ye're auld an' gatty,
An' be as canty
As ye were nine year less than thretty,
Sweet ane-an'-twenty.

But stooks are cowpet * wi' the blast,
An' now the sinn keeks in the west
Then I maun rin amang the rest
An' quat my chanter;
Sae I subscribe mysel in haste,
Your's, Rab the Ranter.

TO THE

REV. JOHN M'MATH,

INCLOSING A COPY OF HOLY WILLIE'S PRAYER, WHICH HE HAD REQUESTED.

Sept. 17*th*, 1785.

While at the stook the shearers cow'r
To shun the bitter blaudin' show'r,
Or in gulravage † rinnin scow'r
To pass the time,
To you I dedicate the hour
In idle rhyme.

My musie, tir'd wi' mony a sonnet
On gown, an' ban', an' douse black bonnet,
Is grown right eerie now she's done it,
Lest they shou'd blame her,
An' rouse their holy thunder on it
And anathem her.

I own 'twas rash, an' rather hardy,
That I, a simple, countra bardie,
Shou'd meddle wi' a pack sae sturdy,
Wha, if they ken me,
Can easy, wi' a single wordie,
Louse h–ll upon me.

But I gae mad at their grimaces,
Their sighan, cantan, grace-proud faces,
Their three-mile prayers, an hauf-mile graces,
Their raxan conscience,
Whaws greed, revenge, an' pride disgraces
Waur nor their nonsense.

There's *Gaun*, ‡ miska't waur than a beast,
Wha has mair honor in his breast
Than mony scores as guid's the priest
Wha sae abus't him.
An' may a bard no crack his jest
What way they've use't him.

See him, ‖ the poor man's friend in need,
The gentleman in word an' deed,
An' shall his fame an' honour bleed
By worthless skellums,
An' not a muse erect her head
To cowe the blellums?

---

* *Jocteleg*—a knife.
† *Browster wives*—Alehouse wives.

* *Cowpet*—Tumbled over.
† *Gulravage*—Running in a confused, disorderly manner, like boys when leaving school.
‡ Gavin Hamilton, Esq.
‖ The poet has introduced the two first lines of this stanza into the dedication of his works to Mr. Hamilton.

O Pope, had I thy satire's darts
To gie the rascals their deserts,
I'd rip their rotten, hollow hearts,
An' tell aloud
Their jugglin' hocus-pocus arts
To cheat the crowd.

God knows, I'm no the thing I shou'd be,
Nor am I ev'n the thing I cou'd be,
But twenty times, I rather wou'd be
An atheist clean,
Than under gospel colours hid be
Just for a screen.

An honest man may like a glass,
An honest man may like a lass,
But mean revenge, an' malice fause
He'll still disdain,
An' then cry zeal for gospel laws,
Like some we ken.

They take religion in their mouth;
They talk o' mercy, grace, an' truth,
For what? to gie their malace skouth
On some puir wight,
An' hunt him down, o'er right an' ruth,
To ruin streight.

All hail, religion! maid divine!
Pardon a muse sae mean as mine,
Who in her rough imperfect line
Thus daurs to name thee;
To stigmatize false friends of thine
Can ne'er defame thee.

Tho' blotch't an' foul wi' mony a stain,
An' far unworthy of thy train,
With trembling voice I tune my strain
To join with those,
Who boldly dare thy cause maintain
In spite of foes:

In spite o' crowds, in spite o' mobs,
In spite of undermining jobs,
In spite o' dark banditti stabs
At worth an' merit,
By scoundrels, even wi' holy robes,
But hellish spirit.

O Ayr, my dear, my native ground,
Within thy presbyterial bound
A candid lib'ral band is found
Of public teachers,
As men, as Christians too renown'd
An' manly preachers.

Sir, in that circle you are nam'd;
Sir, in that circle you are fam'd;
An' some, by whom your doctrine's blam'd,
(Which gies you honor)
Even Sir, by them your heart's esteem'd,
An' winning-manner.

Pardon this freedom I have ta'en,
An' if impertinent I've been,
Impute it not, good Sir, in ane
Whase heart ne'er wrang'd ye,
But to his utmost would befriend
Ought that belang'd ye.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

MAUCHLINE.

(RECOMMENDING A BOY).

Mosgaville, May 3, 1786.

I HOLD it, Sir, my bounden duty
To warn you how that Master Tootie,
Alias, Laird M'Gaun,*
Was here to hire yon lad away
'Bout whom ye spak the tither day,
An' wad hae don't aff han':
But lest he learn the callan tricks,
As faith I muckle doubt him,
Like scrapin' out auld Crummie's nicks,
An' tellin' lies about them;
As lieve then I'd have then,
Your clerkship he should sair,
If sae be, ye may be
Not fitted otherwhere.

Altho' I say't, he's gleg enough,
An' 'bout a house that's rude an' rough,
The boy might learn to *swear*;
But then wi' *you*, he'll be sae taught,
An' get sic fair *example* straught,
I hae na ony fear.
Ye'll catechise him every quirk,
An' shore him weel wi' *hell*;
An' gar him follow to the *kirk*——
——Ay when ye gang *yoursel*.
If ye then, maun be then
Frae hame this comin Friday,
Then please Sir, to lea'e Sir,
The orders wi' your lady.

My word of honour I hae gien,
In Paisley John's, that night at e'en,
To meet the *Warld's worm*;
To try to get the twa to gree,
An' name the airles† an' the fee,
In legal mode an' form:
I ken he weel a *Snick* can draw,
When simple bodies let him;
An' if a *Devil* be at a',
In faith he's sure to get him,
To phrase you an' praise you,
Ye ken your Laureat scorns:
The pray'r still, you share still,
Of grateful MINSTREL BURNS.

---

* *Master Tootie* then lived in Mauchline; a dealer in Cows. It was his common practice to cut the nicks or markings from the horns of cattle, to disguise their age.—He was an artful trick-contriving character; hence he is called a *Snick-drawer*. In the poet's "*Address to the Deil*," he styles that august personage an *auld, snick-drawing* dog!

† *The Airles*—Earnest money.

TO MR. M'ADAM,

OF CRAIGEN-GILLAN,

IN ANSWER TO AN OBLIGING LETTER HE SENT IN THE COMMENCEMENT OF MY POETIC CAREER.

Sir, o'er a gill I gat your card,
I trow it made me proud;
See wha taks notice o' the bard!
I lap and cry'd fu' loud.

Now deil-ma-care about their jaw,
The senseless, gawky million;
I'll cock my nose aboon them a',
I'm roos'd by Craigen-Gillan!

'Twas noble, Sir; 'twas like yoursel,
To grant your high protection:
A great man's smile, ye ken fu' well,
Is ay a blest infection.

Tho', by his * banes wha in a tub
Match'd Macedonian Sandy!
On my ain legs thro' dirt and dub,
I independent stand ay.—

And when those legs to gude, warm kail,
Wi' welcome canna bear me;
A lee dyke-side, a sybow-tail,
And barley-scone shall cheer me.

Heaven spare you lang to kiss the breath
O' mony flow'ry simmers!
And bless your bonie lasses baith,
I'm tald they're loosome kimmers!

And God bless young Dunaskin's laird,
The blossom of our gentry!
And may he wear an auld man's beard,
A credit to his country.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL,

GLENRIDDEL,

(EXTEMPORE LINES ON RETURING A NEWSPAPER).

Ellisland, Monday Evening.

Your news and review, Sir, I've read through and through, Sir,
With little admiring or blaming:
The papers are barren of home-news or foreign,
No murders or rapes worth the naming.

Our friends the reviewers, those chippers and hewers,
Are judges of mortar and stone, Sir;
But of *meet*, or *unmeet*, in a *fabric complete*,
I'll boldly pronounce they are none, Sir.

My goose-quill too rude is to tell all your goodness
Bestowed on your servant, the Poet;
Would to God I had one like a beam of the sun,
And then all the world, Sir, should know it!

* Diogenes.

TO TERRAUGHTY,*

ON HIS BIRTH-DAY.

Health to the Maxwells' vet'ran Chief!
Health, ay unsour'd by care or grief:
Inspir'd, I turn'd Fate's sybil leaf,
This natal morn,
I see thy life is stuff o' prief,
Scarce quite half worn.—

This day thou metes threescore eleven,
And I can tell that bounteous Heaven
(The second sight, ye ken, is given
To ilka Poet)
On thee a tack o' seven times seven
Will yet bestow it.

If envious buckies view wi' sorrow
Thy lengthen'd days on this blest morrow,
May desolation's lang-teeth'd harrow,
Nine miles an hour,
Rake them, like Sodom and Gomorrah,
In brunstane stoure—

But for thy friends, and they are mony,
Baith honest men and lasses bonie,
May couthie fortune, kind and cannie,
In social glee,
Wi' mornings blythe and e'enings funny
Bless them and thee.

Farweel, auld birkie! Lord be near ye,
And then the Deil he daurna steer ye
Your friends ay love, your faes ay fear ye,
For me, shame fa' me,
If neist my heart I dinna wear ye
While Burns they ca' me.

THE VOWELS:

A TALE.

'Twas where the birch and sounding thong are ply'd,
The noisy domicile of pedant pride;
Where ignorance her darkening vapour throws,
And cruelty directs the thickening blows;

* Mr. Maxwell, of Terraughty, near Dumfries. This is the J. P. who, at the Excise Courts, called for Burns's reports: they shewed that *he*, while he acted up to the law, could reconcile his duty with humanity. 'Altho' an Exciseman he had a heart.'

Upon a time, Sir Abece the great,
In all his pedagogic powers elate,
His awful chair of state resolves to mount,
And call the trembling vowels to account.—

First enter'd A, a grave, broad, solemn wight,
But ah! deform'd, dishonest to the sight!
His twisted head look'd backward on his way,
And flagrant from the scourge he grunted *ai!*

Reluctant, E stalk'd in; with piteous race
The justling tears ran down his honest face!
That name, that well-worn name, and all his own,
Pale he surrenders at the tyrant's throne!
The pedant stifles keen the Roman sound,
Not all his mongrel diphthongs can compound;
And next the title following close behind,
He to the nameless, ghastly wretch assign'd.

The cobweb'd gothic dome resounded, Y!
In sullen vengeance, I, disdain'd reply:
The pedant swung his felon cudgel round,
And knock'd the groaning vowel to the ground!

In rueful apprehension enter'd O,
The wailing minstrel of despairing woe;
Th' Inquisitor of Spain, the most expert,
Might there have learnt new mysteries of his art:
So grim, deform'd, with horrors entering U,
His dearest friend and brother scarcely knew!

As trembling U stood staring all aghast,
The pedant in his left hand clutch'd him fast,
In helpless infants' tears he dipp'd his right,
Baptiz'd him *eu*, and kick'd him from his sight.

A SKETCH.

A LITTLE, upright, pert, tart, tripping wight,
And still his precious self his dear delight:
Who loves his own smart shadow in the streets,
Better than e'er the fairest she he meets.
A man of fashion too, he made his tour,
Learn'd *vive la bagatelle, et vive l' amour;*
So travell'd monkies their grimace improve,
Polish their grin, nay sigh for ladies' love.
Much specious lore but little understood;
Fineering oft outshines the solid wood:
His solid sense—by inches you must tell,
But mete his cunning by the old Scots ell;
His meddling vanity, a busy fiend,
Still making work his selfish craft must mend.

TO THE OWL:

BY JOHN M'CREDDIE.

SAD bird of night, what sorrow calls thee forth,
To vent thy plaints thus in the midnight hour?
Is it some blast that gathers in the north,
Threat'ning to nip the verdure of thy bow'r?

Is it, sad owl, that autumn strips the shade,
And leaves thee here, unshelter'd and forlorn?
Or fear that winter will thy nest invade?
Or friendless melancholy bids thee mourn?

Shut out, lone bird, from all the feather'd train,
To tell thy sorrows to th' unheeding gloom
No friend to pity when thou dost complain,
Grief all thy thought, and solitude thy home.

Sing on sad mourner! I will bless thy strain,
And pleas'd in sorrow listen to thy song:
Sing on sad mourner! to the night complain,
While the lone echo wafts thy notes along.

Is beauty less, when down the glowing cheek
Sad, piteous tears in native sorrows fall?
Less kind the heart when anguish bids it break?
Less happy he who lists to pity's call?

Ah no, sad owl! nor is thy voice less sweet,
That sadness tunes it, and that grief is there;
That spring's gay notes, unskill'd, thou canst repeat;
That sorrow bids thee to the gloom repair:

Nor that the treble songsters of the day,
Are quite estranged, sad bird of night! from thee;
Nor that the thrush deserts the evening spray,
When darkness calls thee from thy reverie.—

From some old tow'r, thy melancholy dome,
While the gray walls and desert solitudes
Return each note, responsive to the gloom
Of ivied coverts and surrounding woods;

There hooting; I will list more pleas'd to thee,
Than ever lover to the nightingale;
Or drooping wretch, oppress'd with misery,
Lending his ear to some condoling tale.

EXTEMPORE,

IN THE COURT OF SESSION.

Tune—"Gillicrankie."

LORD ADVOCATE, ROBERT DUNDAS.

HE clench'd his pamphlets in his fist,
He quoted and he hinted,
Till in a declamation-mist,
His argument he tint it:
He gaped for't, he graped for't,
He fand it was awa, man;
But what his common sense came short,
He eked out wi' law, man.

MR. HENRY ERSKINE.

Collected Harry stood awee,
Then open'd out his arm, man;
His lordship sat wi' ruefu' e'e,
And ey'd the gathering storm, man:
Like wind-driv'n hail it did assail,
Or torrents owre a lin, man;
The *Bench* sae wise lift up their eyes,
Half-wauken'd wi' the din, man.

ON HEARING THAT THERE WAS FALSEHOOD IN THE REV. DR. B——'S VERY LOOKS.

THAT there is falsehood in his looks
I must and will deny:
They say their master is a knave—
And sure they do not lie.

ADDRESS

TO GENERAL DUMOURIER.

(A PARODY ON ROBIN ADAIR).

You're welcome to Despots, Dumourier;
You're welcome to Despots, Dumourier.—
How does Dampiere do?
Aye, and Bournonville too?
Why did they not come along with you, Dumourier?

I will fight France with you, Dumourier,—
I will fight France with you, Dumourier:—
I will fight France with you,
I will take my chance with you;
By my soul I'll dance a dance with you, Dumourier.
Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about, Dumourier;
Then let us fight about,
'Till freedom's spark is out,
Then we'll be d–mned no doubt—Dumourier.*

EXTEMPORE EFFUSIONS.

[The Poet paid a visit on horseback to Carlisle: while he was at table his steed was turned out to graze in an enclosure, but wandered, probably in quest of better pasture, into an adjoining one: it was impounded by order of the Mayor—whose term of office expired next day:—The Muse thus delivered herself on the occasion]:

Was e'er puir poet sae befitted,
The maister drunk—the horse committed;
Puir harmless beast! take thee nae care,
Thou'lt be a horse, when he's nae mair–(mayor).

TO A FRIEND,

WITH A POUND OF SNUFF.

O could I give thee India's wealth,
As I this trifle send;
Why then the joy of both would be,
To share it with a friend.

But golden sands ne'er yet have graced
The Heliconian stream;
Then take what gold can never buy,
An honest Bard's esteem.

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* It is almost needless to observe that the song of *Robin Adair*, begins thus:—
You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair;
You're welcome to Paxton, Robin Adair.—
How does Johnny Mackerell do?
Aye, and Luke Gardener too?
Why did they not come along with you, Robin Adair?

ESSAY

UPON

SCOTTISH POETRY,

INCLUDING THE POETRY OF BURNS,

BY DR. CURRIE

THAT Burns had not the advantages of a classical education, or of any degree of acquaintance with the Greek or Roman writers in their original dress, has appeared in the history of his life. He acquired indeed some knowledge of the French language, but it does not appear that he was ever much conversant in French literature, nor is there any evidence of his having derived any of his poetical stories from that source. With the English classics he became well acquainted in the course of his life, and the effects of this acquaintance are observable in his latter productions; but the character and style of his poetry were formed very early, and the model which he followed, in as far as he can be said to have had one, is to be sought for in the works of the poets who have written in the Scottish dialect—in the works of such of them more especially, as are familiar to the peasantry of Scotland. Some observations on these may form a proper introduction to a more particular examination of the poetry of Burns. The studies of the editor in this direction are indeed very recent and very imperfect. It would have been imprudent for him to have entered on this subject at all, but for the kindness of Mr. Ramsay of Ochtertyre, whose assistance he is proud to acknowledge, and to whom the reader must ascribe whatever is of any value in the following imperfect sketch of literary compositions in the Scottish idiom.

It is a circumstance not a little curious, and which does not seem to be satisfactorily explained, that in the thirteenth century the language of the two British nations, if at all different, differed only in dialect, the Gaelic in the one, like the Welch and Armoric in the other, being confined to the mountainous districts.* The English under the Edwards, and the Scots under Wallace and Bruce, spoke the same language. We may observe also, that in Scotland the history ascends to a period nearly as remote as in England. Barbour and Blind Harry, James the First, Dunbar, Douglas, and Lindsay, who lived in the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries, were coeval with the fathers of poetry in England; and in the opinion of Mr. Wharton, not inferior to them in genius or in composition. Though the language of the two countries gradually deviated from each other during this period, yet the difference on the whole was not considerable; nor perhaps greater than between the different dialects of the different parts of England in our own time.

At the death of James the Fifth, in 1542, the language of Scotland was in a flourishing condition, wanting only writers in prose equal to those in verse. Two circumstances, propitious on the whole, operated to prevent this. The first was the passion of the Scots for composition in Latin; and the second, the accession of James the Sixth to the English throne. It may easily be imagined, that if Buchanan had devoted his admirable talents, even in part, to the cultivation of his native tongue, as was done by the revivers of letters in Italy, he would have left compositions in that language which might have excited other men of genius to have followed his example,† and give duration to the language itself. The union of the two crowns in the person of James, overthrew all reasonable expectation of this kind. That monarch, seated on the English throne, would no longer be addressed in the rude dialect in which the Scottish clergy had so often insulted his dignity. He encouraged Latin or English only, both of which he prided himself on writing with purity, though he himself never could acquire the English pronunciation, but spoke with a Scottish idiom and intonation to the last. Scotsmen of talents declined writing in their native language, which they knew was not acceptable to their learned and pedantic monarch; and at a time when national prejudice and enmity prevailed to a great degree, they disdained to study the nicities of the English tongue, though of so much easier acquisition than a dead language. Lord Stirling and Drummond of Hawthornden, the only Scotsmen who wrote

* *Historical Essays on Scottish Song*, p. 20, by Mr. Ritson.

† *e. g.* The Authors of the *Deliciæ Poetarum Scotorum, &c.*

poetry in those times, were exceptions. They studied the language of England, and composed in it with precision and elegance. They were however the last of their countrymen who deserved to be considered as poets in that century. The muses of Scotland sunk into silence, and did not again raise their voices for a period of eighty years.

To what causes are we to attribute this extreme depression among a people comparatively learned, enterprising, and ingenious? Shall we impute it to the fanaticism of the covenanters, or to the tyranny of the house of Stuart after their restoration to the throne? Doubtless these causes operated, but they seem unequal to account for the effect. In England similar distractions and oppressions took place, yet poetry flourished there in a remarkable degree. During this period, Cowley, and Waller, and Dryden sung, and Milton raised his strain of unparalleled grandeur. To the causes already mentioned, another must be added, in accounting for the torpor of Scottish literature—the want of a proper vehicle for men of genius to employ. The civil wars had frightened away the Latin muses, and no standard had been established of the Scottish tongue, which was deviating still farther from the pure English idiom.

The revival of literature in Scotland may be dated from the establishment of the union, or rather from the extinction of the rebellion in 1715. The nations being finally incorporated, it was clearly seen that their tongues must in the end incorporate also; or rather indeed that the Scottish language must degenerate into a provincial idiom, to be avoided by those who would aim at distinction in letters, or rise to eminence in the united legislature.

Soon after this, a band of men of genius appeared, who studied the English classics, and imitated their beauties in the same manner as they studied the classics of Greece and Rome. They had admirable models of composition lately presented to them by the writers of the reign of Queen Anne; particularly in the periodical papers published by Steele, Addison, and their associated friends, which circulated widely through Scotland, and diffused every where a taste for purity of style and sentiment, and for critical disquisition. At length, the Scottish writers succeeded in English composition, and a union was formed of the literary talents, as well as of the legislatures of the two nations. On this occasion the poets took the lead. While Henry Home,* Dr. Wallace, and their learned associates, were only laying in their intellectual stores, and studying to clear themselves of their Scottish idioms, Thomson, Mallet, and Hamilton of Bangour, had made their appearance before the public, and been enrolled on the list of English poets. The writers in prose followed—a numerous and powerful band, and poured their ample stores into the general stream of British literature. Scotland possessed her four universities before the accession of James to the English throne. Immediately before the union, she acquired her parochial schools. These establishments combining happily together, made the elements of knowledge of easy acquisition, and presented a direct path, by which the ardent student might be carried along into the recesses of science or learning. As civil broils ceased, and faction and prejudice gradually died away, a wider field was opened to literary ambition, and the influence of the Scottish institutions for instruction, on the productions of the press, became more and more apparent.

It seems indeed probable, that the establishment of the parochial schools produced effects on the rural muse of Scotland also, which have not hitherto been suspected, and which, though less splendid in their nature, are not however to be regarded as trivial, whether we consider the happiness or the morals of the people.

There is some reason to believe, that the original inhabitants of the British isles possessed a peculiar and interesting species of music, which being banished from the plains by the successive invasions of the Saxons, Danes, and Normans, was preserved with the native race, in the wilds of Ireland and in the mountains of Scotland and Wales. The Irish, the Scottish, and the Welsh music, differ indeed from each other, but the difference may be considered as in dialect only, and probably produced by the influence of time, like the different dialects of their common language. If this conjecture be true, the Scottish music must be more immediately of a Highland origin, and the Lowland tunes, though now of a character somewhat distinct, must have descended from the mountains in remote ages. Whatever credit may be given to conjectures, evidently involved in great uncertainty, there can be no doubt that the Scottish peasantry have been long in possession of a number of songs and ballads composed in their native dialect, and sung to their native music. The subjects of these compositions were such as most interested the simple inhabitants, and in the succession of time varied probably as the condition of society varied. During the separation and the hostility of the two nations, these songs and ballads, as far as our imperfect documents enable us to judge, were chiefly warlike; such as the *Huntis of Cheviot*, and the *Battle of Harlaw*. After the union of the two crowns, when a certain degree of peace and tranquillity took place, the rural muse of Scotland breathed in softer accents. "In the want of real evidence respecting the history of our songs," says Ramsay of Ochtertyre, "recourse may be had to conjecture. One would be disposed to think, that the most beautiful of the Scottish tunes were clothed with new words after the union of the crowns. The inhabitants of the borders, who had formerly been warriors from choice, and husbandmen from necessity, either quitted the country, or were transformed into real shep-

* Lord Kaims.

herds, easy in their circumstances, and satisfied with their lot. Some sparks of that spirit of chivalry for which they are celebrated by Froissart, remained sufficient to inspire elevation of sentiment and gallantry towards the fair sex. The familiarity and kindness which had long subsisted between the gentry and the peasantry, could not all at once be obliterated, and this connexion tended to sweeten rural life. In this state of innocence, ease, and tranquillity of mind, the love of poetry and music would still maintain its ground, though it would naturally assume a form congenial to the more peaceful state of society. The minstrels, whose metrical tales used once to rouse the borderers like the trumpet's sound, had been, by an order of the Legislature (1579), classed with rogues and vagabonds, and attempted to be suppressed. Knox and his disciples influenced the Scottish parliament, but contended in vain with her rural muse. Amidst our Arcadian vales, probably on the banks of the Tweed, or some of its tributary streams, one or more original geniuses may have arisen who were destined to give a new turn to the taste of their countrymen. They would see that the events and pursuits which chequer private life were the proper subjects for popular poetry. Love, which had formerly held a divided sway with glory and ambition, became now the master-passion of the soul. To portray in lively and delicate colours, though with a hasty hand, the hopes and fears that agitate the breast of the love-sick swain, or forlorn maiden, afford ample scope to the rural poet. Love-songs, of which Tibullus himself would not have been ashamed, might be composed by an uneducated rustic with a slight tincture of letters; or if in these songs the character of the rustic be sometimes assumed, the truth of character, and the language of nature, are preserved. With unaffected simplicity and tenderness, topics are urged, most likely to soften the heart of a cruel and coy mistress, or to regain a fickle lover. Even in such as are of a melancholy cast, a ray of hope breaks through, and dispels the deep and settled gloom which characterizes the sweetest of the Highland *lunags*, or vocal airs. Nor are these songs all plaintive; many of them are lively and humorous, and some appear to us coarse and indelicate. They seem, however, genuine descriptions of the manners of an energetic and sequestered people in their hours of mirth and festivity, though in their portraits some objects are brought into open view, which more fastidious painters would have thrown into shade.

"As those rural poets sung for amusement, not for gain, their effusions seldom exceeded a love-song, or a ballad of satire or humour, which, like the words of the elder minstrels, were seldom committed to writing, but treasured up in the memory of their friends and neighbours. Neither known to the learned nor patronized by the great, these rustic bards lived and died in obscurity; and by a strange fatality, their story, and even their very names have been forgotten. When proper models for pastoral songs were produced, there would be no want of imitators. To succeed in this species of composition, soundness of understanding and sensibility of heart were more requisite than flights of imagination or pomp of numbers. Great changes have certainly taken place in Scottish song-writing, though we cannot trace the steps of this change; and few of the pieces admired in Queen Mary's time are now to be discovered in modern collections. It is possible, though not probable, that the music may have remained nearly the same, though the words to the tunes were entirely new-modelled."

These conjectures are highly ingenious. It cannot, however, be presumed, that the state of ease and tranquillity described by Mr. Ramsay took place among the Scottish peasantry immediately on the union of the crowns, or indeed during the greater part of the seventeenth century. The Scottish nation, through all ranks, was deeply agitated by the civil wars, and the religious persecutions which succeeded each other in that disastrous period; it was not till after the revolution in 1688, and the subsequent establishment of their beloved form of church government, that the peasantry of the Lowlands enjoyed comparative repose; and it is since that period that a great number of the most admired Scottish songs have been produced, though the tunes to which they are sung, are in general of much greater antiquity. It is not unreasonable to suppose, that the peace and security derived from the Revolution, and the Union, produced a favourable change on the rustic poetry of Scotland; and it can scarcely be doubted, that the institution of parish schools in 1696, by which a certain degree of instruction was diffused universally among the peasantry, contributed to this happy effect.

Soon after this appeared Allan Ramsay, the Scottish Theocritus. He was born on the high mountains that divide Clydesdale and Annandale, in a small hamlet by the banks of Glengonar, a stream which descends into the Clyde. The ruins of this hamlet are still shown to the inquiring traveller. He was the son of a peasant, and probably received such instruction as his parish-school bestowed, and the poverty of his parents admitted. Ramsay made his appearance in Edinburgh, in the beginning of the present century, in the humble character of an apprentice to a barber; he was then fourteen or fifteen years of age. By degrees he acquired notice for his social disposition, and his talent for the composition of verses in the Scottish idiom; and, changing his profession for that of a bookseller, he became intimate with many of the literary, as well as the gay and fashionable characters of his time.* Having published a

* "He was coeval with Joseph Mitchell, and his club of *small* wits, who, about 1719, published a very poor miscellany, to which Dr. Young, the author of

volume of poems of his own in 1721, which was favourably received, he undertook to make a collection of ancient Scottish poems, under the title of the *Ever-Green*, and was afterwards encouraged to present to the world a collection of Scottish songs. "From what sources he procured them," says Ramsay of Ochtertyre, "whether from tradition or manuscript, is uncertain. As in the *Ever-Green* he made some rash attempts to improve on the originals of his ancient poems, he probably used still greater freedom with the songs and ballads. The truth cannot, however, be known on this point, till manuscripts of the songs printed by him, more ancient than the present century, shall be produced, or access be obtained to his own papers, if they are still in existence. To several tunes which either wanted words, or had words that were improper or imperfect, he or his friends adapted verses worthy of the melodies they accompanied, worthy indeed of the golden age. These verses were perfectly intelligible to every rustic, yet justly admired by persons of taste, who regarded them as the genuine offspring of the pastoral muse. In some respects Ramsay had advantages not possessed by poets writing in the Scottish dialect in our days. Songs in the dialect of Cumberland or Lancashire, could never be popular, because these dialects have never been spoken by persons of fashion. But till the middle of the present century, every Scotsman, from the peer to the peasant, spoke a truly Doric language. It is true the English moralists and poets were by this time read by every person of condition, and considered as the standards for polite composition. But, as national prejudices were still strong, the busy, the learned, the gay, and the fair continued to speak their native dialect, and that with an elegance and poignancy of which Scotsmen of the present day can have no just notion. I am old enough to have conversed with Mr. Spittal, of Leuchat, a scholar and a man of fashion, who survived all the members of the Union Parliament, in which he had a seat. His pronunciation and phraseology differed as much from the common dialect, as the language of St. James's from that of Thames Street. Had we retained a court and parliament of our own, the tongues of the two sister kingdoms would indeed have differed like the Castilian and Portuguese; but each would have its own classics, not in a single branch, but in the whole circle of literature.

"Ramsay associated with the men of wit and fashion of his day, and several of them attempted to write poetry in his manner. Persons too idle or too dissipated to think of compositions that required much exertion, succeeded very happily in making tender sonnets to favourite tunes in compliment to their mistresses, and transforming themselves into impassioned shepherds, caught the language of the characters they assumed. Thus, about the year 1731, Robert Crawfurd of Auchinames, wrote the modern song of *Tweedside*,* which has been so much admired. In 1743, Sir Gilbert Elliot, the first of our lawyers who both spoke and wrote English elegantly, composed, in the character of a love-sick swain, a beautiful song, beginning, *My sheep I neglected, I lost my sheep-hook*, on the marriage of his mistress, Miss Forbes, with Ronald Crawfurd. And about twelve years afterwards, the sister of Sir Gilbert wrote the *ancient* words to the tune of the *Flowers of the Forest*,† and supposed to allude to the battle of Flowden. In spite of the double rhyme, it is a sweet, and though in some parts allegorical, a natural expression of national sorrow. The more *modern* words to the same tune, beginning, *I have seen the smiling of fortune beguiling*, were written long before by Mrs. Cockburn, a woman of great wit, who outlived all the first group of *literati* of the present century, all of whom were very fond of her. I was delighted with her company, though when I saw her, she was very old. Much did she know that is now lost."

In addition to these instances of Scottish songs, produced in the earlier part of the present century, may be mentioned the ballad of *Hardiknute*, by Lady Wardlaw; the ballad of *William and Margaret*; and the song entitled the *Birks of Invermay*, by Mallet; the love-song, beginning, *For ever, Fortune, wilt thou prove*, produced by the youthful muse of Thomson; and the exquisite pathetic ballad, *the Braes of Yarrow*, by Hamilton of Bangour. On the revival of letters in Scotland, subsequent to the Union, a very general taste seems to have prevailed for the national songs and music. "For many years," says Mr. Ramsay, "the singing of songs was the great delight of the higher and middle order of the people, as well as of the peasantry; and though a taste for Italian music has interfered with this amusement, it is still very prevalent. Between forty and fifty years ago, the common people were not only exceedingly fond of songs and ballads, but of metrical history. Often have I, in my cheerful morn of youth, listened to them with delight, when reading or reciting the exploits of Wallace and Bruce against the *Southrons*. Lord Hailes was wont to call Blind Harry their *Bible*, he being their great favourite next the Scriptures. When, therefore, one in the vale of life felt the first emotion of genius, he wanted not models *sui generis*. But though the seeds of poetry were scattered with a plentiful hand among the Scottish peasantry, the product was probably like that of pears and apples—of a thousand that sprung up, nine hundred and fifty are so bad as to set the teeth on edge; forty-five or

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he *Night Thoughts*, prefixed a copy of verses." *Extract of a letter from Mr Ramsay of Ochtertyre to the Editor.*

* Beginning, *What beauties does Flora disclose!*

† Beginning, *I have heard a lilting at our ewes-milking*

more are passable and useful; and the rest of an exquisite flavour. Allan Ramsay and Burns are *wildings* of this last description. They had the example of the elder Scottish poets; they were not without the aid of the best English writers; and, what was of still more importance, they were no strangers to the book of nature, and to the book of God."

From this general view, it is apparent that Allan Ramsay may be considered as in a great measure the reviver of the rural poetry of his country. His collection of ancient Scottish poems under the name of *The Ever-green*, his collection of Scottish songs, and his own poems, the principal of which is the *Gentle Shepherd*, have been universally read among the peasantry of his country, and have in some degree superseded the adventures of Bruce and Wallace, as recorded by Barbour and Blind Harry. Burns was well acquainted with all of these. He had also before him the poems of Fergusson in the Scottish dialect, which have been produced in our own times, and of which it will be necessary to give a short account.

Fergusson was born of parents who had it in their power to procure him a liberal education, a circumstance, however, which in Scotland, implies no very high rank in society. From a well written and apparently authentic account of his life, we learn that he spent six years at the schools of Edinburgh and Dundee, and several years at the universities of Edinburgh and St. Andrew's. It appears that he was at one time destined for the Scottish church; but as he advanced towards manhood, he renounced that intention, and at Edinburgh entered the office of an attorney. Fergusson had sensibility of mind, a warm and generous heart, and talents for society, of the most attractive kind. To such a man no situation could be more dangerous than that in which he was placed. The excesses into which he was led, impaired his feeble constitution, and he sunk under them in the month of October, 1774, in his 23d or 24th year. Burns was not acquainted with the poems of this youthful genius when he himself began to write poetry; and when he first saw them, he had renounced the muses. But while he resided in the town of Irvine, meeting with *Fergusson's Scottish Poems*, he informs us that he "strung his lyre anew with emulating vigour." Touched by the sympathy originating in kindred genius, and in the forebodings of similar fortune, Burns regarded Fergusson with a partial and an affectionate admiration. Over his grave he erected a monument, as has already been mentioned; and his poems he has in several instances made the subjects of his imitation.

From this account of the Scottish poems known to Burns, those who are acquainted with them will see they are chiefly humorous or pathetic; and under one or other of these descriptions most of his own poems will class. Let us compare him with his predecessors under each of these points of view, and close our examination with a few general observations.

It has frequently been observed, that Scotland has produced, comparatively speaking, few writers who have excelled in humour. But this observation is true only when applied to those who have continued to reside in their own country, and have confined themselves to composition in pure English; and in these circumstances it admits of an easy explanation. The Scottish poets, who have written in the dialect of Scotland, have been at all times remarkable for dwelling on subjects of humour, in which indeed some of them have excelled. It would be easy to show, that the dialect of Scotland having become provincial, is now scarcely suited to the more elevated kinds of poetry. If we may believe that the poem of *Christis Kirk of the Grene* was written by James the First of Scotland, this accomplished monarch, who had received an English education under Henry the Fourth, and who bore arms under his gallant successor, gave the model on which the greater part of the humorous productions of the rustic muse of Scotland had been formed. *Christis Kirk of the Grene* was reprinted by Ramsay, somewhat modernized in the orthography, and two cantos were added by him, in which he attempts to carry on the design. Hence the poem of King James is usually printed in Ramsay's works. The royal bard describes, in the first canto, a rustic dance, and afterwards a contention in archery, ending in an affray. Ramsay relates the restoration of concord, and the renewal of the rural sports with the humours of a country wedding. Though each of the poets describes the manners of his respective age, yet in the whole piece there is a very sufficient uniformity; a striking proof of the identity of character in the Scottish peasantry at the two periods, distant from each other three hundred years. It is an honourable distinction to this body of men, that their character and manners, very little embellished, have been found to be susceptible of an amusing and interesting species of poetry; and it must appear not a little curious, that the single nation of modern Europe which possesses an original poetry, should have received the model, followed by their rustic bards, from the monarch on the throne.

The two additional cantos to *Christis Kirk of the Grene*, written by Ramsay, though objectionable in point of delicacy, are among the happiest of his productions. His chief excellence indeed, lay in the description of rural characters, incidents, and scenery; for he did not possess any very high powers either of imagination or of understanding. He was well acquainted with the peasantry of Scotland, their lives and opinions. The subject was in a great measure new; his talents were equal to the subject, and he has shown that it may be happily adapted to pastoral poetry. In his *Gentle Shepherd*, the characters are delineations from nature, the descriptive parts are in the genuine

style of beautiful simplicity, the passions and affections of rural life are finely portrayed, and the heart is pleasingly interested in the happiness that is bestowed on innocence and virtue. Throughout the whole there is an air of reality which the most careless reader cannot but perceive; and in fact no poem ever perhaps acquired so high a reputation, in which truth received so little embellishment from the imagination. In his pastoral songs, and his rural tales, Ramsay appears to less advantage, indeed, but still with considerable attraction. The story of the *Monk and the Miller's Wife*, though somewhat licentious, may rank with the happiest productions of Prior or La Fontaine. But when he attempts subjects from higher life, and aims at pure English composition, he is feeble and uninteresting, and seldom even reaches mediocrity. Neither are his familiar epistles and elegies in the Scottish dialect entitled to much approbation. Though Fergusson had higher powers of imagination than Ramsay, his genius was not of the highest order; nor did his learning, which was considerable, improve his genius. His poems written in pure English, in which he often follows classical models, though superior to the English poems of Ramsay, seldom rise above mediocrity; but in those composed in the Scottish dialect he is often very successful. He was, in general, however, less happy than Ramsay in the subjects of his muse. As he spent the greater part of his life in Edinburgh, and wrote for his amusement in the intervals of business or dissipation, his Scottish poems are chiefly founded on the incidents of a town life, which, though they are not susceptible of humour, do not admit of those delineations of scenery and manners, which vivify the rural poetry of Ramsay, and which so agreeably amuse the fancy and interest the heart. The town eclogues of Fergusson, if we may so denominate them, are however faithful to nature, and often distinguished by a very happy vein of humour. His poems entitled *The Daft Days*, *The King's Birth-day in Edinburgh*, *Leith Races*, and *The Hallow Fair*, will justify this character. In these, particularly in the last, he imitated *Christis Kirk of the Grene*, as Ramsay had done before him. His *Address to the Tron-kirk Bell* is an exquisite piece of humour, which Burns has scarcely excelled. In appreciating the genius of Fergusson, it ought to be recollected, that his poems are the careless effusions of an irregular though amiable young man, who wrote for the periodical papers of the day, and who died in early youth. Had his life been prolonged under happier circumstances of fortune, he would probably have risen to much higher reputation. He might have excelled in rural poetry, for though his professed pastorals on the established Sicilian model, are stale and uninteresting, *The Farmer's Ingle*,* which may be considered as a Scottish pastoral, is the happiest of all his productions, and certainly was the archetype of the *Cotter's Saturday Night*. Fergusson, and more especially Burns, have shown, that the character and manners of the peasantry of Scotland, of the present times, are as well adapted to poetry, as in the days of Ramsay, or of the author of *Christis Kirk of the Grene*.

The humour of Burns is of a richer vein than that of Ramsay or Fergusson, both of whom, as he himself informs us, he had "frequently in his eye, but rather with a view to kindle at their flame, than to servile imitation." His descriptive powers, whether the objects on which they are employed be comic or serious, animate, or inanimate, are of the highest order.—A superiority of this kind is essential to every species of poetical excellence. In one of his earlier poems his plan seems to be to inculcate a lesson of contentment on the lower classes of society, by showing that their superiors are neither much better nor happier than themselves; and this he chooses to execute in the form of a dialogue between two dogs. He introduces this dialogue by an account of the persons and characters of the speakers. The first, whom he has named *Cæsar*, is a dog of condition:—

"His locked, letter'd, braw brass collar,
Showed him the gentleman and scholar."

High-bred though he is, he is however full of condescension:

"At kirk or market, mill or smiddie,
Nae tawted tyke, tho' e'er sae duddie,
But he wad stan't, as glad to see him,
An' stroan't on stanes an' hillocks wi' him."

The other, *Luath*, is a "plougman's-collie," but a cur of a good heart and a sound understanding.

"His honest, sonsie, baws'nt face,
Aye gat him friends in ilka place;
His breast was white, his towsie back
Weel clad wi' coat o' glossy black;
His gawcie tail, wi' upward curl,
Hung o'er his hurdies wi' a swirl."

Never were *two dogs* so exquisitely delineated. Their gambols, before they sit down to moralize, are described with an equal degree of happiness; and through the whole dialogue, the character, as well as the different condition of the two speakers, is kept in view. The speech of *Luath*, in which he enumerates the comforts of the poor, gives the following account of their merriment on the first day of the year:

"That merry day the year begins,
They bar the door on frosty winds:

* The farmer's fire-side.

The nappy reeks wi' mantling ream,
And sheds a heart-inspirin' steam;
The luntin pipe, and sneeshin' mill,
Are handed round wi' right guid-will;
The canty auld folks crackin' crouse,
The young anes rantin' thro' the house—
My heart has been sae fain to see them,
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them."

Of all the animals who have moralized on human affairs since the days of Æsop, the dog seems best entitled to this privilege, as well from his superior sagacity, as from his being, more than any other, the friend and associate of man. The dogs of Burns, excepting in their talent for moralizing, are downright dogs. The "twa dogs" are constantly kept before our eyes, and the contrast between their form and character as dogs, and the sagacity of their conversation, heightens the humour, and deepens the impression of the poet's satire. Though in this poem the chief excellence may be considered as humour, yet great talents are displayed in its composition; the happiest powers of description and the deepest insight into the human heart. It is seldom, however, that the humour of Burns appears in so simple a form. The liveliness of his sensibility frequently impels him to introduce into subjects of humour, emotions of tenderness or of pity; and, where occasion admits, he is sometimes carried on to exert the higher powers of imagination. In such instances he leaves the society of Ramsay and of Fergusson, and associates himself with the masters of English poetry, whose language he frequently assumes.

Of the union of tenderness and humour, examples may be found in *The Death and Dying Words of poor Mailie*, in *The auld Farmer's New-Year's Morning Salutation to his Mare Maggie*, and in many other of his poems. The praise of whisky is a favourite subject with Burns. To this he dedicates his poem of *Scotch Drink*. After mentioning its cheering influence in a variety of situations, he describes, with singular liveliness and power of fancy, its stimulating effects on the blacksmith working at his forge:

"Nae mercy, then, for airn or steel;
The brawnie, bainie, ploughman chiel,
Brings hard owre-hip, wi' sturdy wheel,
The strong fore-hammer,
Till block an' studdie ring and reel
Wi' dinsome clamour."

Again, however, he sinks into humour, and concludes the poem with the following most laughable, but most irreverent apostrophe:

"Scotland, my auld, respected mither!
Though whyles ye moistify your leather,
'Till where you sit, on craps o' heather,
Ye tine your dam;
Freedom and *Whisky* gang thegither,
Tak' aff your dram!"

Of this union of humour, with the higher powers of imagination, instances may be found in the poem entitled *Death and Dr. Hornbook*, and in almost every stanza of the *Address to the Deil*, one of the happiest of his productions. After reproaching this terrible being with all his "doings" and misdeeds, in the course of which he passes through a series of Scottish superstitions, and rises at times into a high strain of poetry; he concludes this address, delivered in a tone of great familiarity, not altogether unmixed with apprehension, in the following words:

"But, fare ye weel, auld Nickie-ben!
O wad ye tak a thought an' men'!
Ye aiblins might—I dinna ken—
Still ha'e a stake—
I'm wae to think upo' yon den
Ev'n for your sake!

Humour and tenderness are here so happily intermixed, that it is impossible to say which preponderates.

Fergusson wrote a dialogue between the *Causeway* and the *Plainstones*,* of Edinburgh. This probably suggested to Burns his dialogue between the Old and New Bridge over the river Ayr. The nature of such subjects requires that they shall be treated humorously, and Fergusson has attempted nothing beyond this. Though the *Causeway* and the *Plainstones* talk together, no attempt is made to personify the speakers.

In the dialogue between the *Brigs of Ayr*, the poet, "press'd by care," or "inspired by whim," had left his bed in the town of Ayr, and wandered out alone in the darkness and solitude of a winter night, to the mouth of the river, where the stillness was interrupted only by the rushing sound of the influx of the tide. It was after midnight. The Dungeon-clock had struck two, and the sound had been repeated by Wallace-Tower. All else was hushed. The moon shone brightly, and

"The chilly frost, beneath the silver beam,
Crept, gently-crusting, o'er the glittering stream."

In this situation, the listening bard hears the "clanging sugh" of wings moving through the air, and speedily he perceives two beings, reared, the one on the Old, the other on the New Bridge, whose form and attire he describes, and whose conversation with each other he rehearses. These genii enter into a comparison of the respective edifices over which they preside, and afterwards, as is usual between the old and young, compare modern characters and manners with those of past times. They differ, as may be ex-

* *Plainstones*—side-pavement.

pected, and taunt and scold each other in broad Scotch. This conversation, which is certainly humorous, may be considered as a proper business of the poem. As the debate runs high, and threatens serious consequences, all at once it is interrupted by a new scene of wonders:

——————" all before their sight
A fairy train appear'd in order bright;
Adown the glittering stream they featly danced;
Bright to the moon their various dresses glanced;
They footed o'er the wat'ry glass so neat,
The infant ice scarce bent beneath their feet;
While arts of minstrelsy among them rung,
And soul-ennobled Bards heroic ditties sung."

. . . . . .

" The Genius of the Stream in front appears,
A venerable chief, advanced in years;
His hoary head with water-lilies crown'd,
His manly leg with garter tangle bound."

Next follow a number of other allegorical beings, among whom are the four seasons, Rural Joy, Plenty, Hospitality, and Courage.

" Benevolence, with mild benignant air,
A female form, came from the tow'rs of Stair:
Learning and Worth in equal measures trode,
From simple Catrine, their long-loved abode:
Last, white-robed Peace, crown'd with a hazel wreath,
To rustic Agriculture did bequeath
The broken iron instrument of Death;
At sight of whom our Sprites forgat their kindling wrath."

This poem, irregular and imperfect as it is, displays various and powerful talents, and may serve to illustrate the genius of Burns. In particular, it affords a striking instance of his being carried beyond his original purpose by the powers of imagination.

In Fergusson's poem, the *Plainstones* and *Causeway* contrast the characters of the different persons who walked upon them. Burns probably conceived, that, by a dialogue between the Old and New Bridge, he might form a humorous contrast between ancient and modern manners in the town of Ayr. Such a dialogue could only be supposed to pass in the stillness of night; and this led our poet into a description of a midnight scene, which excited in a high degree the powers of his imagination. During the whole dialogue the scenery is present to his fancy, and at length it suggests to him a fairy dance of aerial beings, under the beams of the moon, by which the wrath of the Genii of the *Brigs of Ayr* is appeased.

Incongruous as the different parts of this poem are, it is not an incongruity that displeases; and we have only to regret that the poet did not bestow a little pains in making the figures more correct, and in smoothing the versification.

The epistles of Burns, in which may be included his *Dedication to G. H. Esq.* discover, like his other writings, the powers of a superior understanding. They display deep insight into human nature, a gay and happy strain of reflection, great independence of sentiment, and generosity of heart. The *Halloween* of Burns is free from every objection. It is interesting not merely from its humorous description of manners, but as it records the spells and charms used on the celebration of a festival, now, even in Scotland, falling into neglect, but which was once observed over the greater part of Britain and Ireland. These charms are supposed to afford an insight into futurity, especially on the subject of marriage, the most interesting event of rural life. In the *Halloween*, a female, in performing one of the spells, has occasion to go out by moonlight to dip her shift-sleeve into a stream *running towards the South.* It was not necessary for Burns to give a description of this stream. But it was the character of his ardent mind to pour forth not merely what the occasion required, but what it admitted; and the temptation to describe so beautiful a natural object by moonlight, was not to be resisted—

" Whyles owre a linn the burnie plays,
As through the glen it wimpl't;
Whyles round the rocky scar it strays;
Whyles in a wiel it dimpl't;
Whyles glitter'd to the nightly rays,
Wi' bickering dancing dazzle;
Whyles cookit underneath the braes,
Beneath the spreading hazel,
Unseen that night.

Those who understand the Scottish dialect will allow this to be one of the finest instances of description which the records of poetry afford.

In pastoral, or, to speak more correctly, in rural poetry of a serious nature, Burns excelled equally as in that of a humorous kind, and, using less of the Scottish dialect in his serious poems, he becomes more generally intelligible. It is difficult to decide whether the *Address to a Mouse whose nest was turned up with the plough*, should be considered as serious or comic. Be this as it may, the poem is one of the happiest and most finished of his productions. If we smile at the " bickering brattle" of this little flying animal, it is a smile of tenderness and pity. The descriptive part is admirable: the moral reflections beautiful, and arising directly out of the occasion; and in the conclusion there is a deep melancholy, a sentiment of doubt and dread, that arises to the sublime. The *Address to a Mountain Daisy, turned down with the plough*, is a poem of the same nature, though somewhat inferior in point of originality, as well as in the interest produced. To extract out of incidents so common, and seemingly so trivial as these, so fine a train of sentiment and imagery, is the surest proof, as well as the most brilliant triumph, of original genius. *The Vision*, in two cantos, from which a beautiful extract is taken by Mr

Mackenzie, in the 97th number of the *Lounger*, is a poem of great and various excellence. The opening, in which the poet describes his own state of mind, retiring in the evening, wearied, from the labours of the day, to moralize on his conduct and prospects, is truly interesting. The chamber, if we may so term it, in which he sits down to muse, is an exquisite painting :—

" There, lanely, by the ingle cheek,
I sat and eyed the spewing reek,
That fill'd wi' hoast-provoking smeek
That auld clay biggin ;
An' heard the restless rattons squeak
About the riggin."

To reconcile to our imagination the entrance of an aerial being into a mansion of this kind, required the powers of Burns—he, however, succeeds. Coila enters, and her countenance, attitude, and dress, unlike those of other spiritual beings, are distinctly portrayed. To the painting on her mantle, on which is depicted the most striking scenery, as well as the most distinguished characters, of his native country, some exceptions may be made. The mantle of Coila, like the cup of Thyrsis,* and the shield of Achilles, is too much crowded with figures, and some of the objects represented upon it are scarcely admissible, according to the principles of design. The generous temperament of Burns led him into these exuberances. In his second edition he enlarged the number of figures originally introduced, that he might include objects to which he was attached by sentiments of affection, gratitude, or patriotism. The second *Duan*, or canto of this poem, in which Coila describes her own nature and occupations, particularly her superintendence of his infant genius, and in which she reconciles him to the character of a bard, is an elevated and solemn strain of poetry, ranking in all respects, excepting the harmony of numbers, with the higher productions of the English muse. The concluding stanza, compared with that already quoted, will show to what a height Burns rises in this poem, from the point at which he set out :—

" *And wear thou this*—she solemn said,
And bound the *holly* round my head ;
The polish'd leaves, and berries red,
Did rustling play ;
And, like a passing thought, she fled
In light away."

In various poems Burns has exhibited the picture of a mind under the deep impressions of real sorrow. *The Lament*, the *Ode to Ruin*, *Despondency*, and *Winter, a Dirge*, are of this character. In the first of these poems the eighth stanza, which describes a sleepless night from anguish of mind, is particularly striking. Burns often indulged in those melancholy views of the nature and condition of man, which are so congenial to the temperament of sensibility. The poem entitled *Man was made to Mourn*, affords an instance of this kind, and *The Winter Night* is of the same description. The last is highly characteristic, both of the temper of mind, and of the condition of Burns. It begins with a description of a dreadful storm on a night in winter. The poet represents himself as lying in bed, and listening to its howling. In this situation, he naturally turns his thoughts to the *ourie* * *Cattle*, and the *silly*† *Sheep*, exposed to all the violence of the tempest. Having lamented their fate, he proceeds in the following :—

" Ilk happing bird—wee helpless thing !
That in the merry months o' spring,
Delighted me to hear thee sing,
What comes o' thee ?
Whare wilt thou cow'r thy chittering wing,
An' close thy e'e ?

Other reflections of the same nature occur to his mind ; and as the midnight moon, " muffled with clouds," casts her dreary light on his window, thoughts of a darker and more melancholy nature crowd upon him. In this state of mind, he hears a voice pouring through the gloom, a solemn and plaintive strain of reflection. The mourner compares the fury of the elements with that of man to his brother man, and finds the former light in the balance.

" See stern Oppression's iron grip,
Or mad Ambition's gory hand,
Sending, like blood-hounds from the slip,
Woe, want, and murder, o'er the land."

He pursues this train of reflection through a variety of particulars, in the course of which he introduces the following animated apostrophe :—

" O ye ! who sunk in beds of down,
Feel not a want but what yourselves create,
Think, for a moment, on his wretched fate,
Whom friends and fortune quite disown !
Ill-satisfy'd keen Nature's clam'rous call,
Stretch'd on his straw he lays him down to sleep,
While thro' the ragged roof and chinky wall,
Chill o'er his slumbers piles the drifty heap."

The strain of sentiment which runs through this poem is noble, though the execution is unequal, and the versification is defective.

Among the serious poems of Burns, *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is perhaps entitled to the first rank. *The Farmer's Ingle* of Fergusson evidently suggested the plan of this poem, as has been already mentioned ; but after the plan was formed, Burns trusted entirely to his

* See the first *Idyllium* of Theocritus.

* *Ourie*, out-lying. *Ourie Cattle*, Cattle that are unhoused all winter.

† *Silly* is in this, as in other places, a term of compassion and endearment.

own powers for the execution. Fergusson's poem is certainly very beautiful. It has all the charms which depend on rural characters and manners happily portrayed, and exhibited under circumstances highly grateful to the imagination. *The Farmer's Ingle* begins with describing the return of evening. The toils of the day are over, and the farmer retires to his comfortable fire-side. The reception which he and his men-servants receive from the careful house-wife, is pleasingly described. After their supper is over, they begin to talk on the rural events of the day.

" 'Bout kirk and market eke their tales gae on,
How *Jock* woo'd *Jenny* here to be his bride ;
And there how *Marion* for a bastard son,
Upon the cutty-stool was forced to ride,
The waefu' scauld o' our *Mess John* to bide.

The " Guidame" is next introduced as forming a circle round the fire, in the midst of her grand-children, and while she spins from the rock, and the spindle plays on her " russet lap," she is relating to the young ones tales of witches and ghosts. The poet exclaims,

" O mock na this my friends ! but rather mourn,
Ye in life's brawest spring wi' reason clear,
Wi' eild our idle fancies a' return,
And dim our dolefu' days wi' bairnly fear ;
The mind's aye *cradl'd* when the *grave* is near."

In the meantime the farmer, wearied with the fatigues of the day, stretches himself at length on the *settle*, a sort of rustic couch, which extends on one side of the fire, and the cat and house-dog leap upon it to receive his caresses. Here, resting at his ease, he gives his directions to his men-servants for the succeeding day. The house-wife follows his example, and gives her orders to the maidens. By degrees the oil in the cruise begins to fail ; the fire runs low ; sleep steals on his rustic group ; and they move off to enjoy their peaceful slumbers. The poet concludes by bestowing his blessing on the " husbandman and all his tribe."

This is an original and truly interesting pastoral. It possesses every thing required in this species of composition. We might have perhaps said, every thing that it admits, had not Burns written his *Cotter's Saturday Night*.

The cottager returning from his labours, has no servants to accompany him, to partake of his fare, or to receive his instructions. The circle which he joins, is composed of his wife and children only ; and if it admits of less variety, it affords an opportunity for representing scenes that more strongly interest the affections. The younger children running to meet him, and clambering round his knee ; the elder, returning from their weekly labours with the neighbouring farmers, dutifully depositing their little gains with their parents, and receiving their father's blessing and instructions ; the incidents of the courtship of Jenny, their eldest daughter, " woman grown," are circumstances of the most interesting kind, which are most happily delineated ; and after their frugal supper, the representation of these humbler cottagers forming a wider circle round their hearth, and uniting in the worship of God, is a picture the most deeply affecting of any which the rural muse has ever presented to the view. Burns was admirably adapted to this delineation. Like all men of genius he was of the temperament of devotion, and the powers of memory co-operated in this instance with the sensibility of his heart, and the fervour of his imagination. *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is tender and moral, it is solemn and devotional, and rises at length in a strain of grandeur and sublimity, which modern poetry has not surpassed. The noble sentiments of patriotism with which it concludes, correspond with the rest of the poem. In no age or country have the pastoral muses breathed such elevated accents, if the Messiah of Pope be excepted, which is indeed a pastoral in form only. It is to be regretted that Burns did not employ his genius on other subjects of the same nature, which the manners and customs of the Scottish peasantry would have amply supplied. Such poetry is not to be estimated by the degree of pleasure which it bestows ; it sinks deeply into the heart, and is calculated, far beyond any other human means, for giving permanence to the scenes and the characters it so exquisitely describes.

Before we conclude, it will be proper to offer a few observations on the lyric productions of Burns. His compositions of this kind are chiefly songs, generally in the Scottish dialect, and always after the model of the Scottish songs, on the general character and moral influence of which, some observations have already been offered. We may hazard a few more particular remarks.

Of the historic or heroic ballads of Scotland it is unnecessary to speak. Burns has no where imitated them, a circumstance to be regretted, since in this species of composition, from its admitting the more terrible, as well as the softer graces of poetry, he was eminently qualified to have excelled. The Scottish songs which served as a model to Burns, are almost without exception pastoral, or rather rural. Such of them as are comic, frequently treat of a rustic courtship, or a country wedding ; or they describe the differences of opinion which arise in married life. Burns has imitated this species, and surpassed his models. The song beginning " Husband, husband, cease your strife," may be cited in support of this observation.* His other

* The dialogues between husbands and their wives which form the subjects of the Scottish songs, are almost all ludicrous and satirical, and in these contests the lady is generally victorious. From the collections of Mr. Pinkerton, we find that the comic muse of Scotland delighted in such representations from very early times, in her rude dramatic efforts, as well as in her rustic songs.

comic songs are of equal merit. In the rural songs of Scotland, whether humorous or tender, the sentiments are given to particular characters, and very generally, the incidents are referred to particular scenery. This last circumstance may be considered as a distinguishing feature of the Scottish songs, and on it a considerable part of their attraction depends. On all occasions the sentiments, of whatever nature, are delivered in the character of the person principally interested. If love be described, it is not as it is observed, but as it is felt; and the passion is delineated under a particular aspect. Neither is it the fiercer impulses of desire that are expressed, as in the celebrated ode of Sappho, the model of so many modern songs; but those gentler emotions of tenderness and affection, which do not entirely absorb the lover; but permit him to associate his emotions with the charms of external nature, and breathe the accents of purity and innocence, as well as of love. In these respects the love-songs of Scotland are honourably distinguished from the most admired classical compositions of the same kind; and by such associations, a variety as well as liveliness, is given to the representation of this passion, which are not to be found in the poetry of Greece or Rome, or perhaps of any other nation. Many of the love-songs of Scotland describe scenes of rural courtship; many may be considered as invocations from lovers to their mistresses. On such occasions a degree of interest and reality is given to the sentiment, by the spot destined to these happy interviews being particularized. The lovers perhaps meet at the *Bush aboon Traquair*, or on the *Banks of Ettrick;* the nymphs are invoked to wander among the wilds of *Roslin* or *the Woods of Invermay*. Nor is the spot merely pointed out; the scenery is often described as well as the character, so as to represent a complete picture to the fancy. * Thus the maxim of Horace, *ut pictura poesis*, is faithfully observed by these rustic bards, who are guided by the same impulse of nature and sensibility which influenced the father of epic poetry, on whose example the precept of the Roman poet was perhaps founded. By this means the imagination is employed to interest the feelings. When we do not conceive distinctly, we do not sympathize deeply in any human affection; and we conceive nothing in the abstract. Abstraction, so useful in morals, and so essential in science, must be abandoned when the heart is to be subdued by the powers of poetry or of eloquence. The bards of a ruder condition of society paint individual objects; and hence, among other causes, the easy access they obtain to the heart. Generalization is the voice of poets, whose learning overpowers their genius; of poets of a refined and scientific age.

The dramatic style which prevails so much in the Scottish songs, while it contributes greatly to the interest they excite, also shows that they have originated among a people in the earlier stages of society. Where this form of composition appears in songs of a modern date, it indicates that they have been written after the ancient model.*

The Scottish songs are of very unequal poetical merit, and this inequality often extends to the different parts of the same song. Those that are humorous, or characteristic of manners, have in general the merit of copying nature; those that are serious are tender and often sweetly interesting, but seldom exhibit high powers of imagination, which indeed do not

* One or two examples may illustrate this observation. A Scottish song, written about a hundred years ago, begins thus:—

"On Ettrick Banks, on a summer's night
At gloaming, when the sheep drove hame
I met my lassie, braw and tight,
Come wading barefoot a' her lane.

My heart grew light, I ran, I flang
My arms about her lily-neck,
And kissed and clasped there fu' lang—
My words they were na mony feck."

The lover, who is a Highlander, goes on to relate the language he employed with his Lowland maid to win her heart, and to persuade her to fly with him to the Highland hills, there to share his fortune. The sentiments are in themselves beautiful. But we feel them with double force, while we conceive that they were addressed by a lover to his mistress, whom he met all alone on a summer's evening, by the banks of a beautiful stream, which some of us have actually seen, and which all of us can paint to our imagination. Let us take another example. It is now a nymph that speaks. Here how she expresses herself—

"How blythe each morn was I to see
My swain come o'er the hill!
He skipt the burn, and flew to me,
I met him with good will."

Here is another picture drawn by the pencil of Nature. We see a shepherdess standing by the side of a brook, watching her lover, as he descends the opposite hill. He bounds lightly along; he approaches nearer and nearer; he leaps the brook, and flies into her arms. In the recollection of these circumstances, the surrounding scenery becomes endeared to the fair mourner, and she bursts into the following exclamation:—

"O the broom, the bonnie bonnie broom,
The broom of the Cowden-knowes!
I wish I were with my dear swain,
With his pipe and his ewes."

Thus the individual spot of this happy interview is pointed out, and the picture is completed.

* That the dramatic form of writing characterizes productions of an early, or what amounts to the same, of a rude stage of society, may be illustrated by a reference to the most ancient compositions that we know of, the Hebrew scriptures, and the writings of Homer. The form of dialogue is adopted in the old Scottish ballads, even in narration, whenever the situations described become interesting. This sometimes produces a very striking effect, of which an instance may be given from the ballad of *Edom o' Gordon*, a composition apparently of the sixteenth century. The story of the ballad is shortly this:—The Castle of Rhodes, in the absence of its lord, is attacked by the robber Edom Gordon. The lady stands on her defence, beats off the assailants, and wounds Gordon, who in his rage orders the castle to be set on fire. That his orders are carried into effect, we learn from the expostulation of the lady, who is represented as standing on the battle-

easily find a place in this species of composition. The alliance of the words of the Scottish songs with the music has in some instances given to the former a popularity, which otherwise they would never have obtained.

The association of the words and the music of these songs with the more beautiful parts of the scenery of Scotland, contributes to the same effect. It has given them not merely popularity, but permanence; it has imparted to the works of man some portion of the durability of the works of nature. If, from our imperfect experience of the past, we may judge with any confidence respecting the future, songs of this description are of all others the least likely to die. In the changes of language they may no doubt suffer change; but the associated strain of sentiment and of music will perhaps survive, while the clear stream sweeps down the vale of Yarrow, or the yellow broom waves on the Cowden-Knowes.

The first attempts of Burns in song-writing were not very successful. His habitual inattention to the exactness of rhymes, and to the harmony of numbers, arising probably from the models on which his versification was formed, were faults likely to appear to more advantage in this species of composition, than in any other; and we may also remark, that the strength of his imagination, and the exuberance of his sensibility, were with difficulty restrained within the limits of gentleness, delicacy and tenderness, which seem to be assigned to the love-songs of his nation. Burns was better adapted by nature for following in such compositions the model of the Grecian than of the Scottish muse. By study and practice he however surmounted all these obstacles. In his earlier songs there is some ruggedness; but this gradually disappears in his successive efforts; and some of his later compositions of this kind may be compared, in polished delicacy, with the finest songs in our language, while in the eloquence of sensibility they surpass them all.

The songs of Burns, like the models he followed and excelled, are often dramatic, and for the greater part amatory; and the beauties of rural nature are every where associated with the passions and emotions of the mind. Disdaining to copy the works of others, he has not, like some poets of great name, admitted into his descriptions exotic imagery. The landscapes he has painted, and the objects with which they are embellished, are, in every single instance, such as are to be found in his own country. In a mountainous region, especially when it is comparatively rude and naked, the most beautiful scenery will always be found in the valleys, and on the banks of the wooded streams. Such scenery is peculiarly interesting at the close of a summer day. As we advance northwards, the number of the days of summer, indeed, diminishes; but from this cause, as well as from the mildness of the temperature, the attraction increases, and the summer night becomes still more beautiful. The greater obliquity of the sun's path in the ecliptic, prolongs the grateful season of twilight to the midnight hours, and the shades of the evening seem to mingle with the morning's dawn. The rural poets of Scotland, as may be expected, associate in their songs the expression of passion, with the most beautiful of their scenery, in the fairest season of the year, and generally in those hours of the evening when the beauties of nature are most interesting.

To all these adventitious circumstances, on which so much of the effect of poetry depends, great attention is paid by Burns. There is scarcely a single song of his in which particular scenery is not described, or allusions made to natural objects, remarkable for beauty or interest; and though his descriptions are not so full as are sometimes met with in the older Scottish songs, they are in the highest degree appropriate and interesting. Instances in proof of this might be quoted from the *Lea Rig*, *Highland Mary*, the *Soldier's Return*, *Logan Water*, from that beautiful pastoral, *Bonnie Jean*, and a great number of others. Occasionally the force of his genius carries him beyond the usual boundaries of Scottish song, and the natural objects introduced have more of the character of sublimity. An instance of this kind is noticed by Mr. Syme, and many others might be adduced.

"Had I a cave on some wild, distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the wave's dashing roar;
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close
Ne'er to wake more."

In one song, the scene of which is laid in a winter night, the "wan moon" is described as "setting behind the white waves;" in another, the "storms" are apostrophized, and commanded to "rest in the cave of their slumbers." On several occasions, the genius of Burns loses sight entirely of his archetypes, and rises into a strain of uniform sublimity. Instances of this kind appear in *Liberty, a Vision*, and in his two

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ments and remonstrating on this barbarity. She is interrupted—

"O then bespake her little son,
Sate on his nourice knee;
Says 'mither dear, gi' owre this house,
For the reek it smithers me.'
"I wad gie a' my gowd, my childe,
Sae wad I a' my fee,
For ae blast o' the westlin wind,
To blaw the reek frae thee."

The circumstantiality of the Scottish love-songs, and the dramatic form which prevails so generally in them, probably arises from their being the descendants and successors of the ancient ballads. In the beautiful modern song of *Mary of Castle-Cary*, the dramatic form has a very happy effect. The same may be said of *Donald and Flora*, and *Come under my Plaidie*, by the same author, Mr. Macniel.

war-songs, *Bruce to his troops*, and the *Song of Death*. These last are of a description of which we have no other in our language. The martial songs of our nation are not military, but naval. If we were to seek a comparison of these songs of Burns with others of a similar nature, we must have recourse to the poetry of ancient Greece, or of modern Gaul.

Burns has made an important addition to the songs of Scotland. In his compositions, the poetry equals and sometimes surpasses the music. He has enlarged the poetical scenery of his country. Many of her rivers and mountains, formerly unknown to the muse, are now consecrated by his immortal verse. The Doon, the Lugar, the Ayr, the Nith, and the Cluden, will in future, like the Yarrow, the Tweed, and the Tay, be considered as classic streams, and their borders will be trode with new and superior emotions.

The greater part of the songs of Burns were written after he removed into the county of Dumfries. Influenced, perhaps, by habits formed in early life, he usually composed while walking in the open air. When engaged in writing these songs, his favourite walks were on the banks of the Nith, or of the Cluden, particularly near the ruins of Lincluden Abbey; and this beautiful scenery he has very happily described under various aspects, as it appears during the softness and serenity of evening, and during the stillness and solemnity of the moonlight night.

There is no species of poetry, the productions of the drama not excepted, so much calculated to influence the morals, as well as the happiness of a people, as those popular verses which are associated with the national airs, and which being learnt in the years of infancy, make a deep impression on the heart before the evolution of the powers of the understanding. The compositions of Burns, of this kind, now presented in a collected form to the world, make a most important addition to the popular songs of his nation. Like all his other writings, they exhibit independence of sentiment; they are peculiarly calculated to increase those ties which bind generous hearts to their native soil, and to the domestic circle of their infancy: and to cherish those sensibilities which, under due restriction, form the purest happiness of our nature. If in his unguarded moments he composed some songs on which this praise cannot be bestowed, let us hope that they will speedily be forgotten. In several instances, where Scottish airs were allied to words objectionable in point of delicacy, Burns has substituted others of a purer character. On such occasions, without changing the subject, he has changed the sentiments. A proof of this may be seen in the air of *John Anderson my Joe*, which is now united to words that breathe a strain of conjugal tenderness, that is as highly moral as it is exquisitely affecting.

Few circumstances could afford a more striking proof of the strength of Burns's genius, than the general circulation of his poems in England, notwithstanding the dialect in which the greater part are written, and which might be supposed to render them here uncouth or obscure. In some instances he has used this dialect on subjects of a sublime nature; but in general he confines it to sentiments or description of a tender or humorous kind; and, where he rises into elevation of thought, he assumes a purer English style. The singular faculty he possessed of mingling in the same poem humorous sentiments and descriptions, with imagery of a sublime and terrific nature, enabled him to use this variety of dialect on some occasions with striking effect. His poem of *Tam o' Shanter* affords an instance of this. There he passes from a scene of the lowest humour, to situations of the most awful and terrible kind. He is a musician that runs from the lowest to the highest of his keys; and the use of the Scottish dialect enables him to add two additional notes to the bottom of his scale.

Great efforts have been made by the inhabitants of Scotland, of the superior ranks, to approximate in their speech to the pure English standard; and this has made it difficult to write in the Scottish dialect, without exciting in them some feelings of disgust, which in England are scarcely felt. An Englishman who understands the meaning of the Scottish words, is not offended, nay, on certain subjects, he is perhaps pleased with the rustic dialect, as he may be with the Doric Greek of Theocritus.

But a Scotchman inhabiting his own country, if a man of education, and more especially if a literary character, has banished such words from his writings, and has attempted to banish them from his speech; and being accustomed to hear them from the vulgar daily, does not easily admit of their use in poetry, which requires a style elevated and ornamental. A dislike of this kind is, however, accidental, not natural. It is of the species of disgust which we feel at seeing a female of high birth in the dress of a rustic; which, if she be really young and beautiful, a little habit will enable us to overcome. A lady who assumes such a dress puts her beauty, indeed, to a severer trial. She rejects—she, indeed, opposes the influence of fashion; she, possibly, abandons the grace of elegant and flowing drapery; but her native charms remain, the more striking, perhaps, because the less adorned; and to these she trusts for fixing her empire on those affections over which fashion has no sway. If she succeeds, a new association arises. The dress of the beautiful rustic becomes itself beautiful, and establishes a new fashion for the young and the gay. And when, in after ages, the contemplative observer shall view her picture in the gallery that contains the portraits of the beauties of successive centuries, each in the dress of her respective day, her drapery will not deviate, more than that of her rivals, from the standard of his

taste, and he will give the palm to her who excels in the lineaments of nature.

Burns wrote professedly for the peasantry of his country, and by them their native dialect is universally relished. To a numerous class of the natives of Scotland of another description, it may also be considered as attractive in a different point of view. Estranged from their native soil, and spread over foreign lands, the idiom of their country unites with the sentiments and the descriptions on which it is employed, to recall to their minds the interesting scenes of infancy and youth—to awaken many pleasing, many tender recollections. Literary men, residing at Edinburgh or Aberdeen, cannot judge on this point for one hundred and fifty thousand of their expatriated countrymen.

To the use of the Scottish dialect in one species of poetry, the composition of songs, the taste of the public has been for some time reconciled. The dialect in question excels, as has already been observed, in the copiousness and exactness of its terms for natural objects; and in pastoral or rural songs, it gives a Doric simplicity, which is very generally approved. Neither does the regret seem well founded which some persons of taste have expressed, that Burns used this dialect in so many other of his compositions. His declared purpose was to paint the manners of rustic life among his "humble compeers," and it is not easy to conceive, that this could have been done with equal humour and effect, if he had not adopted their idiom. There are some, indeed, who will think the subject too low for poetry. Persons of this sickly taste will find their delicacies consulted in many a polite and learned author; let them not seek for gratification in the rough and vigorous lines, in the unbridled humour, or in the overpowering sensibility of this bard of nature.

To determine the comparative merit of Burns would be no easy task. Many persons afterwards distinguished in literature, have been born in as humble a situation of life; but it would be difficult to find any other who while earning his subsistence by daily labour, has written verses which have attracted and retained universal attention, and which are likely to give the author a permanent and distinguished place among the followers of the muses. If he is deficient in grace, he is distinguished for ease as well as energy; and these are indications of the higher order of genius. The father of epic poetry exhibits one of his heroes as excelling in strength, another in swiftness—to form his perfect warrior, these attributes are combined. Every species of intellectual superiority admits, perhaps, of a similar arrangement. One writer excels in force—another in ease; he is superior to them both, in whom both these qualities are united. Of Homer himself it may be said, that like his own Achilles, he surpasses his competitors in mobility as well as strength.

The force of Burns lay in the powers of his understanding, and in the sensibility of his heart; and these will be found to infuse the living principle into all the works of genius which seem destined to immortality. His sensibility had an uncommon range. He was alive to every species of emotion. He is one of the few poets that can be mentioned, who have at once excelled in humour, in tenderness, and in sublimity; a praise unknown to the ancients, and which in modern times is only due to Ariosto, to Shakspeare, and perhaps to Voltaire. To compare the writings of the Scottish peasant with the works of these giants in literature, might appear presumptuous; yet it may be asserted that he has displayed the *foot of Hercules*. How near he might have approached them by proper culture, with lengthened years, and under happier auspices, it is not for us to calculate. But while we run over the melancholy story of his life, it is impossible not to heave a sigh at the asperity of his fortune; and as we survey the records of his mind, it is easy to see, that out of such materials have been reared the fairest and the most durable of the monuments of genius.

THE SONGS.

THE poetry of Burns has been referred to as one of the causes which prevented the Scottish language from falling into disuse. It was beginning to be discontinued as vulgar, even as the medium of oral communication; and an obvious consequence of that state of the public taste was, that the Scottish songs, sweetly pathetic and expressive as many of them are, were not fashionable, but rather studiously avoided. The publication of his poetry changed this taste. Burns, followed by Scott, not merely revived the use of their native tongue in their own country, but gave it a currency in the polite world generally; an effect which was greatly assisted by Burns's songs, and not a little by what he did for the songs of his predecessors. He was a most devoted admirer of the lyrical effusions of the olden time, and became a diligent collector of the ancient words, as well as of the sets of the music. His remarks, historical and anecdotic, upon the several songs, are amusing and instructive; and where there were blanks to be supplied, he was ready as powerful at a refit. To do all this, and at same time to double the stock of Scottish songs, was no small task; and so well has it been executed, that in place of forming the amusement and delight of the Scots only, they have become a part, nay, have taken the lead, of the lyrical compositions used, and in fashion, throughout the British dominions. It is because of their intrinsic worth, as a branch of elegant amusement, that we have given the whole here, presented in two distinct parts:—The first part contains the songs *before* Burns, with the remarks, by which he has so felicitously illustrated them.—The second part is formed of his own songs, and which are now brought together, in place of being scattered over, and mixed with the prose pieces, as heretofore.—The whole forming a complete collection of *select Scottish Songs*, such as cannot fail to be acceptable to the lovers of good taste, and innocent amusement in every country.

SELECT
SCOTTISH SONGS.

[The poet thus writes to Mrs. Dunlop:—'I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my mother lived awhile in her girlish years; the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died; during which time, his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of *The Life and Age of Man*.' The song, as here given, was taken down from the recitation of the poet's mother, who had never seen a printed copy of it,—and had learned it from *her* mother in early youth.]

THE LIFE AND AGE OF MAN:

OR,

A SHORT DESCRIPTION OF HIS NATURE, RISE AND FALL, ACCORDING TO THE TWELVE MONTHS OF THE YEAR.

Tune—"Isle of Kell."

Upon the sixteen hunder year,
of God and fifty three,
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear,
as writings testifie;
On January the sixteenth day,
as I did ly alone,
With many a sigh and sob did say,
Ah! Man is made to moan.

Dame Natur, that excellent bride,
did stand up me before,
And said to me, thou must provide
this life for to abhor:
Thou seest what things are gone before,
experience teaches thee;
Yet do not miss to remember this,
that one day thou must die.

Of all the creatures bearing life
recall back to thy mind,
Consider how they ebb and flow,
each thing in their own kind;
Yet few of them have such a strain,
as God hath given to thee;
Therefore this lesson keep in mind,—
remember man to die.

Man's course on earth I will report,
if I have time and space;
It may be long, it may be short,
as God hath giv'n him grace.
His natur to the herbs compare,
that in the ground ly dead;
And to each month add five year,
and so we will procede.

The first five years then of man's life
compare to Januar;
In all that time but sturt and strife,
he can but greet and roar.
So is the fields of flowers all bare,
by reason of the frost;
Kept in the ground both safe and sound,
not one of them is lost.

So to years ten I shall speak then
of Februar but lack;
The child is meek and weak of spir't,
nothing can undertake:
So all the flow'rs, for lack of show'rs,
no springing up can make,
Yet birds do sing and praise their king,
and each one choose their mate.

Then in comes March, that noble arch,
with wholesome spring and air,
The child doth spring to years fifteen,
with visage fine and fair;
So do the flow'rs with softening show'rs
ay spring up as we see;
Yet nevertheless remember this,
that one day we must die.

Then brave April doth sweetly smile,
the flow'rs do fair appear,
The child is then become a man,
to the age of twenty year;
If he be kind and well inclin'd,
and brought up at the school,
Then men may know if he foreshow
a wise man or a fool.

Then cometh May, gallant and gay,
when fragrant flow'rs do thrive,

The child is then become a man,
of age twenty and five:
And for his life doth seek a wife,
his life and years to spend;
Christ from above send peace and love,
and grace unto the end!

Then cometh June with pleasant tune,
when fields with flow'rs are clad,
And Phœbus bright is at his height,
all creatures then are glad:
Then he appears of thretty years,
with courage bold and stout;
His nature so makes him to go,
of death he hath no doubt.

Then July comes with his hot climes,
and constant in his kind,
The man doth thrive to thirty-five,
and sober grows in mind;
His children small do on him call,
and breed him sturt and strife;
. . . . . .
. . . . . .

Then August old, both stout and bold,
when flow'rs do stoutly stand;
So man appears to forty years,
with wisdom and command;
And doth provide his house to guide,
children and familie;
Yet do not miss t' remember this,
that one day thou must die.

September then comes with his train,
and makes the flow'rs to fade;
Then man belyve is forty-five,
grave, constant, wise, and staid.
When he looks on, how youth is gone,
and shall it no more see;
Then may he say, both night and day,
have mercy, Lord, on me!

October's blast comes in with boast,
and makes the flow'rs to fall;
Then man appears to fifty years,
old age doth on him call:
The almond tree doth flourish hie,
and pale grows man we see;
Then it is time to use this line,
remember, man, to die.

November air maketh fields bare
of flow'rs, of grass, and corn;
Then man arrives to fifty-five,
and sick both e'en and morn:
Loins, legs, and thighs, without disease,
makes him to sigh and say,
Ah! Christ on high have mind on me,
and learn me for to die!

December fell baith sharp and snell,
makes flow'rs creep in the ground;
Then man's threescore, both sick and sore,
no soundness in him found.
His ears and e'en, and teeth of bane,
all these now do him fail;
Then may he say, both night and day,
that death shall him assail.

And if there be, thro' natur stout,
some that live ten years more;
Or if he creepeth up and down,
till he comes to fourscore;
Yet all this time is but a line,
no pleasure can he see:
Then may he say, both night and day,
have mercy, Lord, on me!

Thus have I shown you as I can,
the course of all mens' life;
We will return where we began,
but either sturt or strife:
Dame Memorie doth take her leave,
she'll last no more, we see;
God grant that I may not you grieve,
Ye'll get nae mair of me.

BESS THE GAWKIE.

This song shews that the Scottish Muses did not all leave us when we lost Ramsay and Oswald,* as I have good reason to believe that the verses and music are both posterior to the days of these two gentlemen.—It is a beautiful song, and in the genuine Scots taste. We have few pastoral compositions, I mean the pastoral of nature, that are equal to this.—Burns.

Blythe young Bess to Jean did say,
Will ye gang to yon sunny brae,
Where flocks do feed and herds do stray,
And sport awhile wi' Jamie?
Ah na, lass, I'll no gang there,
Nor about Jamie tak nae care,
Nor about Jamie tak nae care,
For he's taen up wi' Maggy!

For hark, and I will tell you, lass,
Did I not see your Jamie pass,
Wi' meikle gladness in his face,
Out o'er the muir to Maggy.
I wat he gae her mony a kiss,
And Maggy took them ne'er amiss;
'Tween ilka smack, pleas'd her with this,
That Bess was but a gawkie.

For when a civil kiss I seek,
She turns her head, and thraws her cheek,

* Oswald was a music-seller in London, about the year 1750. He published a large collection of Scottish tunes, which he called *The Caledonian Pocket Companion.* Mr. Tytler observes, that his genius in composition, joined to his taste in the performance of Scottish music, was natural and pathetic. This song has been imputed to a clergyman—Mr. Morehead of Urr in Galloway.

And for an hour she'll scarcely speak;
Who'd not call her a gawkie?
But sure my Maggie has mair sense,
She'll gie a score without offence;
Now gie me ane unto the mense,
And ye shall be my dawtie.

O, Jamie, ye ha'e mony tane,
But I will never stand for ane,
Or twa, when we do meet again;
Sae ne'er think me a gawkie.
Ah, na, lass, that ne'er can be,
Sic thoughts as these are far from me,
Or ony that sweet face that see,
E'er to think thee a gawkie.

But whisht!—nae mair of this we'll speak,
For yonder Jamie does us meet;
Instead of Meg he kiss'd sae sweet,
I trow he likes the gawkie.
O dear bess, I hardly knew,
When I came by, your gown sae new,
I think you've got it wat wi' dew;
Quoth she, that's like a gawkie:

It's wat wi' dew, and 'twill get rain,
And I'll get gowns when it is gane,
Sae you may gang the gate you came,
And tell it to your dawtie.
The guilt appear'd in Jamie's cheek;
He cry'd, O cruel maid, but sweet,
If I should gang anither gate,
I ne'er could meet my dawtie.

The lasses fast frae him they flew,
And left poor Jamie sair to rue,
That ever Maggy's face he knew,
Or yet ca'd Bess a gawkie.
As they went o'er the muir they sang;
The hills and dales with echoes rang,
The hills and dales with echoes rang,
Gang o'er the muir to Maggy!

FAIR ANNIE OF LOCHROYAN.

(ORIGINAL SONG OF—OH OPEN THE DOOR, LORD GREGORY).

It is somewhat singular, that in Lanark, Renfrew, Ayr, Wigton, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries-shires, there is scarcely an old song or tune which, from the title, &c. can be guessed to belong to, or be the production of these counties. This, I conjecture, is one of these very few; as the ballad, which is a long one, is called both by tradition and in printed collections, *The Lass o' Lochroyan*, which I take to be Lochroyan in Galloway.—BURNS.

Sweet Annie built a bonnie ship,
And set her on the sea;
The sails were a' of the damask silk,
The masts of silver free.

The gladsome waters sung below,
And the sweet wind sung above—
Make way for Annie of Lochroyan,
She comes to seek her love.

A gentle wind came with a sweep,
And stretched her silken sail,
When up there came a reaver rude,
With many a shout and hail:
O touch her not, my mariners a',
Such loveliness goes free;
Make way for Annie of Lochroyan,
She seeks Lord Gregorie.

The moon looked out with all her stars,
The ship moved merrily on,
Until she came to a castle high,
That all as diamonds shone:
On every tower there streamed a light,
On the middle tower shone three—
Move for that tower my mariners a',
My love keeps watch for me.

She took her young son in her arms,
And on the deck she stood—
The wind rose with an angry gust,
The sea wave wakened rude.
Oh open the door, Lord Gregory, love;
Oh open and let me in;
The sea foam hangs in my yellow hair,
The surge dreeps down my chin.

All for thy sake, Lord Gregory, love,
I have sailed the perilous way,
And thy fair son is 'tween my breasts,
And he'll be dead ere day.
The foam hangs on the topmost cliff,
The fires run on the sky,
And hear you not your true love's voice,
And her sweet baby's cry?

Fair Annie turned her round about,
And tears began to flow—
May never a baby suck a breast
Wi' a heart sae fou of woe.
Take down, take down that silver mast,
Set up a mast of tree,
It does nae become a forsaken dame
To sail sae royallie.

Oh read my dream, my mother, dear—
I heard a sweet babe greet,
And saw fair Annie of Lochroyan
Lie cauld dead at my feet.
And loud and loud his mother laughed—
Oh sights mair sure than sleep,
I saw fair Annie, and heard her voice,
And her baby wail and weep.

O he went down to yon sea side
As fast as he could fare,
He saw fair Annie and her sweet babe,
But the wild wind tossed them sair;
And hey Annie, and how Annie,
And Annie winna ye bide?

But aye the mair he called Annie,
The broader grew the tide.

And hey Annie, and how Annie,
Dear Annie speak to me,
But aye the louder he cried Annie,
The louder roared the sea.
The wind waxed loud, the sea grew rough,
The ship sunk nigh the shore,
Fair Annie floated through the foam,
But the baby rose no more.

O first he kissed her cherry cheek,
And then he kissed her chin,
And syne he kissed her rosy lips,
But there was nae breath within.
O my love's love was true as light,
As meek and sweet was she—
My mother's hate was strong as death,
And fiercer than the sea.

ROSLIN CASTLE.

These beautiful verses were the production of a Richard Hewit, a young man that Dr. Blacklock, to whom I am indebted for the anecdote, kept for some years as an amanuensis. I do not know who was the author of the second song to the tune. *Tytler*, in his amusing history of Scots music, gives the air to *Oswald*; but in Oswald's own collection of Scots tunes, where he affixes an asterisk to those he himself composed, he does not make the least claim to the tune.—Burns.

'Twas in that season of the year,
When all things gay and sweet appear,
That Colin, with the morning ray,
Arose and sung his rural lay.
Of Nanny's charms the shepherd sung,
The hills and dales with Nanny rung;
While Roslin Castle heard the swain,
And echoed back the cheerful strain.

Awake, sweet Muse! the breathing spring,
With rapture warms; awake and sing!
Awake and join the vocal throng,
Who hail the morning with a song;
To Nanny raise the cheerful lay,
O! bid her haste and come away;
In sweetest smiles herself adorn,
And add new graces to the morn!

O, hark, my love! on ev'ry spray,
Each feather'd warbler tunes his lay;
'Tis beauty fires the ravish'd throng,
And love inspires the melting song:
Then let my raptur'd notes arise,
For beauty darts from Nanny's eyes;
And love my rising bosom warms,
And fills my soul with sweet alarms.

O! come, my love! thy Colin's lay
With rapture calls, O come away!
Come, while the Muse this wreath shall twine
Around that modest brow of thine;
O! hither haste, and with thee bring
That beauty blooming like the spring;
Those graces that divinely shine,
And charm this ravish'd breast of mine!

SAW YE JOHNNIE CUMMIN? QUO' SHE.

This song for genuine humour in the verses, and lively originality in the air, is unparalleled. I take it to be very old.—Burns.

Saw ye Johnnie cummin? quo' she,
Saw ye Johnnie cummin,
O saw ye Johnnie cummin, quo' she;
Saw ye Johnnie cummin,
Wi' his blue bonnet on his head,
And his doggie runnin, quo' she;
And his doggie runnin?

Fee him, father, fee him, quo' she;
Fee him, father, fee him:
For he is a gallant lad,
And a weel doin';
And a' the wark about the house
Gaes wi' me when I see him, quo' she;
Wi' me when I see him.

What will I do wi' him, hussy?
What will I do wi' him?
He's ne'er a sark upon his back,
And I hae nane to gie him.
I hae twa sarks into my kist,
And ane o' them I'll gie him,
And for a mark of mair fee,
Dinna stand wi' him, quo' she;
Dinna stand wi' him.

For weel do I lo'e him, quo' she;
Weel do I lo'e him:
O fee him, father, fee him, quo' she;
Fee him, father, fee him;
He'll haud the pleugh, thrash i' the barn,
And lie wi' me at e'en, quo' she;
Lie wi' me at e'en.

CLOUT THE CALDRON.

A tradition is mentioned in the *Bee*, that the second Bishop Chisholm, of Dunblane, used to say, that if he were going to be hanged, nothing would soothe his mind so much by the way, as to hear *Clout the Caldron* played.

I have met with another tradition, that the old song to this tune,

Hae ye ony pots or pans,
Or onie broken chanlers,

was composed on one of the Kenmure family, in the Cavalier times; and alluded to an amour he had, while under hiding, in the disguise of an itinerant tinker. The air is also known by the name of

The Blacksmith and his Apron,

which from the *rythym*, seems to have been a line of some old song to the tune.—BURNS.

HAVE you any pots or pans,
Or any broken chandlers?
I am a tinkler to my trade,
And newly come frae Flanders,
As scant of siller as of grace,
Disbanded, we've a bad run;
Gar tell the lady of the place,
I'm come to clout her caldron.
Fa adrie, didle, didle, &c.

Madam, if you have wark for me,
I'll do't to your contentment,
And dinna care a single flie
For any man's resentment;
For, lady fair, though I appear
To ev'ry ane a tinkler,
Yet to yoursel I'm bauld to tell,
I am a gentle jinker.
Fa adrie, didle, didle, &c.

Love Jupiter into a swan
Turn'd for his lovely Leda;
He like a bull o'er meadows ran,
To carry aff Europa.
Then may not I, as well as he,
To cheat your Argos blinker,
And win your love, like mighty Jove,
Thus hide me in a tinkler?
Fa adrie, didle, didle, &c.

Sir, ye appear a cunning man,
But this fine plot you'll fail in,
For there is neither pot nor pan
Of mine you'll drive a nail in.
Then bind your budget on your back,
And nails up in your apron,
For I've a tinkler under tack
That's us'd to clout my caldron.
Fa adrie, didle, didle, &c.

SAW YE NAE MY PEGGY?

THIS charming song is much older, and indeed superior, to Ramsay's verses, "*The Toast*," as he calls them. There is another set of the words, much older still, and which I take to be the original one, but though it has a very great deal of merit, it is not quite ladies' reading.—BURNS.

SAW ye nae my Peggy,
Saw ye nae my Peggy,
Saw ye nae my Peggy,
Coming o'er the lea?
Sure a finer creature
Ne'er was form'd by nature,
So complete each feature,
So divine is she.

O! how Peggy charms me;
Every look still warms me;
Every thought alarms me,
Lest she love nae me.
Peggy doth discover
Nought but charms all over;
Nature bids me love her,
That's a law to me.

Who would leave a lover,
To become a rover?
No, I'll ne'er give over,
'Till I happy be.
For since love inspires me,
As her beauty fires me,
And her absence tires me,
Nought can please but she.

When I hope to gain her,
Fate seems to detain her,
Cou'd I but obtain her,
Happy wou'd I be!
I'll ly down before her,
Bless, sigh, and adore her,
With faint looks implore her,
'Till she pity me.

The original words, for they can scarcely be called verses, seem to be as follows; a song familiar from the cradle to every Scottish ear.

Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie,
Saw ye my Maggie,
Linkin o'er the lea?

High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
High kilted was she,
Her coat aboon her knee.

What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie,
What mark has your Maggie,
That ane may ken her *be?* (*by*)

Though it by no means follows that the silliest verses to an air must, for that reason, be the original song; yet I take this ballad, of which I have quoted part, to be the old verses. The two songs in *Ramsay*, one of them evidently his own, are never to be met with in the

fire-side circle of our peasantry; while that which I take to be the old song, is in every shepherd's mouth. *Ramsay*, I suppose, had thought the old verses unworthy of a place in his collection.—BURNS.

FYE, GAE RUB HER O'ER WI' STRAE.

IT is self-evident that the first four lines of this song are part of a song more ancient than Ramsay's beautiful verses which are annexed to them. As music is the language of nature; and poetry, particularly songs, are always less or more localized (if I may be allowed the verb) by some of the modifications of time and place, this is the reason why so many of our Scots airs have outlived their original, and perhaps many subsequent sets of verses; except a single name, or phrase, or sometimes one or two lines, simply to distinguish the tunes by.

To this day among people who know nothing of Ramsay's verses, the following is the song, and all the song that ever I heard:—BURNS.

GIN ye meet a bonnie lassie,
Gie her a kiss and let her gae;
But gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gar rub her o'er wi' strae.

Fye, gae rub her, rub her, rub her,
Fye, gae rub her o'er wi' strae:
An' gin ye meet a dirty hizzie,
Fye, gar rub her o'er wi' strae.

Look up to Pentland's tow'ring tap,
Bury'd beneath great wreaths of snaw,
O'er ilka cleugh, ilk scar, and slap,
As high as ony Roman wa.'

Driving their baws frae whins or tee,
There's no nae gowfers to be seen;
Nor dousser fowk wysing a-jee
The byass-bouls on Tamson's green.

Then fling on coals, and ripe the ribs,
And beek the house baith butt and ben;
That mutchkin stowp it hads but dribs,
Then let's get in the tappit hen.

Good claret best keeps out the cauld,
And drives away the winter soon;
It makes a man baith gash and bauld,
And heaves his saul beyond the moon.

Leave to the gods your ilka care,
If that they think us worth their while,
They can a rowth of blessings spare,
Which will our fashious fears beguile.

For what they have a mind to do,
That will they do, should we gang wood;
If they command the storms to blaw,
Then upo' sight the hailstains thud,

But soon as ere they cry, "Be quiet,'
The blatt'ring winds dare nae mair move,
But cour into their caves, and wait
The high command of supreme Jove.

Let neist day come as it thinks fit,
The present minute's only ours;
On pleasure let's employ our wit,
And laugh at fortune's fickle powers.

Be sure ye dinna quat the grip
Of ilka joy when ye are young,
Before auld age your vitals nip,
And lay ye twafald o'er a rung.

Sweet youth's a blythe and heartsome time;
Then, lads and lasses, while it's May,
Gae pou the gowan in its prime,
Before it wither and decay.

Watch the saft minutes of delyte,
When Jenny speaks beneath her breath,
And kisses, laying a' the wyte
On you, if she kepp ony skaith.

"Haith, ye're ill-bred," she'll smiling say;
"Ye'll worry me, ye greedy rook;"
Syne frae your arms she'll rin away,
And hide hersell in some dark nook.

Her laugh will lead you to the place
Where lies the happiness you want,
And plainly tells you to your face,
Nineteen nay-says are haff a grant.

Now to her heaving bosom cling,
And sweetly toolie for a kiss,
Frae her fair finger whop a ring,
As taiken of a future bless.

These bennisons, I'm very sure,
Are of the gods' indulgent grant;
Then, surly carles, whisht, forbear
To plague us with your whining cant.

THE LASS O' LIVISTON.

THE old song, in three eight-line stanzas, is well known, and has merit as to wit and humour; but it is rather unfit for insertion.—It begins,

THE bonnie lass o' Liviston,
Her name ye ken, her name ye ken,
And she has written in her contract,
To lie her lane, to lie her lane.
&c. &c.

THE LAST TIME I CAME O'ER THE MUIR.

Ramsay found the first line of this song, which had been preserved as the title of the charming air, and then composed the rest of the verses to suit that line. This has always a finer effect than composing English words, or words with an idea foreign to the spirit of the old title. Where old titles of songs convey any idea at all, it will generally be found to be quite in the spirit of the air.—Burns.

The last time I came o'er the muir,
I left my love behind me:
Ye pow'rs! what pain do I endure,
When soft ideas mind me.
Soon as the ruddy morn display'd
The beaming day ensuing,
I met betimes my lovely maid,
In fit retreats for wooing.

Beneath the cooling shade we lay,
Gazing and chastely sporting;
We kiss'd and promis'd time away,
Till night spread her black curtain:
I pitied all beneath the skies,
Ev'n kings, when she was nigh me;
In raptures I beheld her eyes,
Which could but ill deny me.

Should I be call'd where cannons roar,
Where mortal steel may wound me;
Or cast upon some foreign shore,
Where dangers may surround me;
Yet hopes again to see my love,
To feast on glowing kisses,
Shall make my cares at distance move,
In prospect of such blisses.

In all my soul there's not one place
To let a rival enter;
Since she excels in ev'ry grace,
In her my love shall centre.
Sooner the seas shall cease to flow,
Their waves the Alps shall cover;
On Greenland's ice shall roses grow,
Before I cease to love her.

The next time I gang o'er the muir,
She shall a lover find me;
And that my faith is firm and pure,
Though I left her behind me.
Then Hymen's sacred bonds shall chain
My heart to her fair bosom;
There, while my being does remain,
My love more fresh shall blossom.

JOHNNY'S GRAY BREEKS.

Though this has certainly every evidence of being a Scottish air, yet there is a well-known tune and song in the North of Ireland, called, *The Weaver and his Shuttle, O*, which though sung much quicker, is every note the very tune.

When I was in my se'nteen year,
I was baith blythe and bonny,
O the lads loo'd me baith far and near,
But I loo'd nane but Johnny:
He gain'd my heart in twa three weeks,
He spake sae blythe and kindly;
And I made him new gray breeks,
That fitted him most finely.

He was a handsome fellow;
His humour was baith frank and free,
His bonny locks sae yellow,
Like gowd they glitter'd in my ee;—
His dimpl'd chin and rosy cheeks,
And face sae fair and ruddy;
And then a-days his gray breeks,
Was neither auld nor duddy.

But now they're threadbare worn,
They're wider than they wont to be;
They're tashed-like,* and sair torn,
And clouted sair on ilka knee.
But gin I had a simmer's day,
As I have had right mony,
I'd make a web o' new gray,
To be breeks to my Johnny.

For he's weel wordy o' them,
And better gin I had to gie,
And I'll tak pains upo' them,
Frae fauts I'll strive to keep them free.
To clead him weel shall be my care,
And please him a' my study;
But he maun wear the auld pair
Awee, tho' they be duddy.

For when the lad was in his prime,
Like him there was nae mony,
He ca'd me aye his bonny thing,
Sae wha wou'd na lo'e Johnny?
So I lo'e Johnny's gray breeks,
For a' the care they've gi'en me yet,
And gin we live anither year,
We'll keep them hale between us yet.

Now to conclude,—his gray breeks,
I'll sing them up wi' mirth and glee;
Here's luck to a' the gray steeks,
That show themsells upo' the knee!
And if wi' health I'm spared,
A' wee while as I may,
I shall hae them prepared,
As weel as ony that's o' gray.

---

* Stained.

MAY EVE, OR KATE OF ABERDEEN.

KATE of Aberdeen, is, I believe, the work of poor Cunningham the player; of whom the following anecdote, though told before, deserves a recital. A fat dignitary of the church coming past Cunningham one *Sunday* as the poor poet was busy plying a fishing-rod in some stream near Durham, his native country, his reverence reprimanded Cunningham very severely for such an occupation on such a day. The poor poet, with that inoffensive gentleness of manners which was his peculiar characteristic, replied, that he hoped God and his reverence would forgive his seeming profanity of that sacred day, "*as he had no dinner to eat, but what lay at the bottom of that pool!*" This, Mr. Woods, the player, who knew Cunningham well, and esteemed him much, assured me was true.—BURNS.

THE silver moon's enamour'd beam,
Steals softly through the night,
To wanton with the winding stream,
And kiss reflected light.
To beds of state go balmy sleep,
('Tis where you've seldom been),
May's vigil while the shepherds keep
With Kate of Aberdeen!

Upon the green the virgins wait,
In rosy chaplets gay,
Till morn unbar her golden gate,
And give the promis'd May.
Methinks I hear the maids declare
The promis'd May, when seen,
Not half so fragrant, half so fair,
As Kate of Aberdeen!

Strike up the tabor's boldest notes,
We'll rouse the nodding grove;
The nested birds shall raise their throats,
And hail the maid I love:
And see—the matin lark mistakes,
He quits the tufted green;
Fond bird! 'tis not the morning breaks,
'Tis Kate of Aberdeen!

Now lightsome o'er the level mead,
Where midnight fairies rove,
Like them, the jocund dance we'll lead,
Or tune the reed to love:
For see the rosy May draws nigh,
She claims a virgin queen;
And hark, the happy shepherds cry,
"'Tis Kate of Aberdeen!"

THE LASS OF PATIE'S MILL.

' IN *Sinclair's Statistical Account of Scotland*, this song is localized (a verb I *must* use for want of another to express my idea) somewhere in the North of Scotland, and likewise is claimed by Ayrshire.—The following anecdote I had from the present Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, who had it from the last John, Earl of Loudon.—The then Earl of Loudon, father to Earl John, before mentioned, had Ramsay at Loudon, and one day walking together by the banks of Irvine water, near New-Mills, at a place yet called Patie's Mill, they were struck with the appearance of a beautiful country girl. His lordship observed, that she would be a fine theme for a song.—Allan lagged behind in returning to Loudon Castle, and at dinner produced this identical song.—BURNS.

THE lass of Patie's mill,
So bonny, blythe, and gay,
In spite of all my skill,
She stole my heart away.
When tedding of the hay,
Bare-headed on the green,
Love 'midst her locks did play,
And wanton'd in her een.

Her arms white, round, and smooth,
Breasts rising in their dawn,
To age it would give youth,
To press 'em with his hand:
Thro' all my spirits ran
An ecstasy of bliss,
When I such sweetness fand
Wrapt in a balmy kiss.

Without the help of art,
Like flowers which grace the wild,
She did her sweets impart,
Whene'er she spoke or smil'd.
Her looks they were so mild,
Free from affected pride,
She me to love beguil'd;
I wish'd her for my bride.

O had I all that wealth,
HOPETON'S high mountains * fill,
Insur'd lang life and health,
And pleasure at my will;
I'd promise and fulfil,
That none but bonny she,
The lass of Patie's mill
Shou'd share the same wi' me.

THE TURNIMSPIKE.

THERE is a stanza of this excellent song for local humour, omitted in this *set*,—where I have placed the asterisms.†

HERSELL pe highland shentleman,
Pe auld as Pothwell Prig, man;

---

* Thirty-three miles south-west of Edinburgh, where the Earl of Hopeton's mines are.

† Burns had placed the asterisms between the 9th and 10th verses. The verse is here restored.

And mony alterations seen
Amang te lawland whig, man.
Fal, &c

First when her to the lawlands came,
Nainsel was driving cows, man;
There was nae laws about him's nerse,
About the preeks or trews, man.

Nainsell did wear the philabeg,
The plaid prick't on her shonder;
The guid claymore hung pe her pelt,
De pistol sharg'd wi' pouder.

But for whereas these cursed preeks,
Wherewith man's nerse be locket,
O hon! that e'er she saw the day!
For a' her houghs be prokit.

Every ting in de highlands now
Pe turn'd to alteration;
The sodger dwall at our door-sheek,
And tat's te great vexation.

Scotland be turn't a Ningland now,
An' laws pring on de cager;
Nainsell wad durk him for his deeds,
But oh! she fear te sodger.

Anither law came after dat,
Me never saw de like, man;
They mak a lang road on de crund,
And ca' him *Turnimspike*, man.

An' wow! she pe a ponny road,
Like Louden corn-rigs, man;
Where twa carts may gang on her,
An' no preak ithers legs, man.

They sharge a penny for ilka horse,
(In troth, they'll no pe sheaper);
For nought but gaen upo' the crund,
And they gie me a paper.

They tak the horse then py te head,
And tere tey mak her stan, man;
Me tell tem, me hae seen te day,
Tey had na sic comman', man.

Nae doubt, Nainsell maun traw his purse,
And pay tem what him likes, man;
I'll see a shudgment on his toor;
Tat filthy Turnimspike, man.

But I'll awa to the Highland hills,
Where te'il a ane dare turn her,
And no come near your Turnimspike,
Unless it pe to purn her.
Fal, &c.

HIGHLAND LADDIE.

As this was a favourite theme with our later Scottish muses, there are several airs and songs of that name. That which I take to be the oldest, is to be found in the *Musical Museum*, beginning, *I hae been at Crookie-den.*—

I HAE been at *Crookie-den*,*
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
Viewing Willie and his men,
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie.

There our faes that burnt and slew,
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
There, at last, they gat their due,
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie.

Satan sits in his black neuk,
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
Breaking sticks to roast the Duke,
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie:

The bluidy monster gae a yell,
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie;
And loud the laugh gaed round a' hell!
My bonnie laddie, Highland laddie.

One of my reasons is, that Oswald has it in his collection by the name of *The auld Highland Laddie.*—It is also known by the name of *Jinglan Johnie*, which is a well-known song of four or five stanzas, and seems to be an earlier song than Jacobite times. As a proof of this, it is little known to the peasantry by the name of *Highland Laddie;* while every body knows *Jinglan Johnie.* The song begins,

Jinglan John, the meickle man,
He met wi' a lass was blythe and bonnie.

Another *Higland Laddie* is also in the *Museum*, vol. v. which I take to be Ramsay's original, as he has borrowed the chorus "*O my bonnie Highland lad, &c.*" It consists of three stanzas, besides the chorus; and has humour in its composition—it is an excellent but somewhat licentious song.—It begins,

As I cam o'er Cairney-Mount,
And down amang the blooming heather, &c.

This air, and the common *Highland Laddie*, seem only to be different sets.

Another *Highland Laddie*, also in the *Museum*, vol. v. is the tune of several Jacobite fragments.—One of these old songs to it, only exists, as far as I know, in these four lines—

Whare hae ye been a' day,
Bonnie laddie, Highland laddie?
Down the back o' Bell's brae,
Courtin Maggie, courtin Maggie.

* A cant name for Hell

Another of this name is Dr. Arne's beautiful air, called, the *new Highland Laddie.*

THE BLAITHRIE O'T.

The following is a *set* of this song, which was the earliest song I remember to have got by heart. When a child, an old woman sung it to me, and I picked it up, every word, at first hearing.

O Willy weel I mind, I lent you my hand,
To sing you a song which you did me command;
But my memory's so bad, I had almost forgot
That you call'd it the gear and the blaithrie o't.

I'll not sing about confusion, delusion, or pride,
I'll sing about a laddie was for a virtuous bride;
For virtue is an ornament that time will never rot,
And preferable to gear and the blaithrie o't.

Tho' my lassie hae nae scarlets or silks to put on,
We envy not the greatest that sits upon the throne;
I wad rather hae my lassie, tho' she cam in her smock,
Than a princess wi' the gear and the blaithrie o't.

Tho' we hae nae horses or menzie at command,
We will toil on our foot, and we'll work wi' our hand;
And when wearied without rest, we'll find it sweet in any spot,
And we'll value not the gear and the blaithrie o't.

If we hae ony babies, we'll count them as lent;
Hae we less, hae we mair, we will aye be content;
For they say they hae mair pleasure that wins but a groat,
Than the miser wi' his gear and the blaithrie o't.

I'll not meddle wi' th' affairs o' the kirk or the queen;
They're nae matters for a sang, let them sink let them swim,
On your kirk I'll ne'er encroach, but I'll hold it still remote,
Sae tak this for the gear and the blaithrie o't.

THE BLAITHRIE O'T.

When I think on this warld's pelf,
And the little wee share I have o't to myself,
And how the lass that wants it is by the lads forgot,
May the shame fa' the gear and the blaithrie o't!*

Jockie was the laddie that held the plengh,
But now he's got gowd and gear eneugh;
He thinks nae mair of me that wears the plaiden coat;
May the shame fa' the gear and the blaithrie o't!

Jenny was the lassie that mucked the byre,
But now she is clad in her silken attire,
And Jockie says he lo'es her, and swears he's me forgot;
May the shame fa' the gear and the blaithrie o't!

But all this shall never daunton me,
Sae lang's I keep my fancy free:
For the lad that's sae inconstant, he's not worth a groat;
May the shame fa' the gear and the blaithrie o't!

TWEEDSIDE.

In Ramsay's *Tea-table Miscellany*, he tells us that about thirty of the songs in that publication were the works of some young gentlemen of his acquaintance; which songs are marked with the letters D. C., &c.—Old Mr. Tytler, of Woodhouselee, the worthy and able defender of the beauteous Queen of Scots, told me that the songs marked C, in the *Tea-table*, were the composition of a Mr. Crawford, of the house of Achinames, who was afterwards unfortunately drowned coming from France.—As Tytler was most intimately acquainted with Allan Ramsay, I think the anecdote may be depended on. Of consequence, the beautiful song of *Tweedside* is Mr. Crawford's, and indeed does great honour to his poetical talents. He was a Robert Crawford; the Mary he celebrates, was Mary Stuart, of the Castlemilk family, afterwards married to a Mr. John Belches.

What beauties does Flora disclose!
How sweet are her smiles upon Tweed!
Yet Mary's still sweeter than those;
Both nature and fancy exceed.
Nor daisy, nor sweet blushing rose,
Not all the gay flowers of the field,
Nor Tweed gliding gently through those,
Such beauty and pleasure does yield.

The warblers are heard in the grove,
The linnet, the lark, and the thrush,
The blackbird and sweet-cooing dove,
With music enchant ev'ry bush.

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* The following observation was found in a memorandum book belonging to Burns:

The Highlanders' Prayer at Sheriff-Muir.

"O L—d be thou with us; but, if thou be *not* with us, be not against us; *but leave it between the red coats and us!*"

* *Shame fall the gear and the blad'ry o't*, is the turn of an old Scottish song, spoken when a young handsome girl marries an old man, upon the account of his wealth.—Kelly's *Scots Proverbs.*

Come, let us go forth to the mead,
Let us see how the primroses spring,
We'll lodge in some village on Tweed,
And love while the feather'd folks sing.

How does my love pass the long day?
Does Mary not 'tend a few sheep?
Do they never carelessly stray,
While happily she lies asleep?
Tweed's murmurs should lull her to rest;
Kind nature indulging my bliss,
To relieve the soft pains of my breast,
I'd steal an ambrosial kiss.

'Tis she does the virgins excel,
No beauty with her may compare;
Love's graces around her do dwell;
She's fairest, where thousands are fair.
Say, charmer, where do thy flocks stray?
Oh! tell me at noon where they feed;
Shall I seek them on sweet winding Tay,
Or the pleasanter banks of the Tweed?

I have seen a song, calling itself the original *Tweedside*, and said to have been composed by a Lord Yester. It consisted of two stanzas, of which I still recollect the first.

When Maggy and I was acquaint,
I carried my noddle fu' hie;
Nae lintwhite on a' the green plain,
Nor gowdspink sae happy as me:
But I saw her sae fair, and I lo'ed;
I woo'd, but I came nae great speed;
So now I maun wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.

The last stanza runs thus:—Ed.

To Meiggy my love I did tell,
Saut tears did my passion express,
Alas! for I loo'd her o'erwell,
An' the women loo sic a man less.
Her heart it was frozen and cauld,
Her pride had my ruin decreed;
Therefore I will wander abroad,
And lay my banes far frae the Tweed.

THE BOATIE ROWS.

The author of the *Boatie Rows*, was a Mr. Ewen of Aberdeen. It is a charming display of womanly affection mingling with the concerns and occupations of life. It is nearly equal to *There's nae luck about the house.*

O weel may the boatie row,
And better may she speed;
And leesome may the boatie row
That wins my bairns bread:
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed;
And weel may the boatie row
That wins the bairns bread.

I cust* my line in Largo bay,
And fishes I catch'd nine;
There was three to boil, and three to fry,
And three to bait the line:
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed;
And happy be the lot of a'
Who wishes her to speed.

O weel may the boatie row,
That fills a heavy creel,†
And cleads us a' frae head to feet,
And buys our porridge meal:
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows indeed;
And happy be the lot of a'
That wish the boatie speed.

When Jamie vow'd he would be mine,
And wan frae me my heart,
O muckle lighter grew my creel,
He swore we'd never part:
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel;
And muckle lighter is the load,
When love bears up the creel.

My kurtch I put upo' my head,
And dress'd mysel' fu' braw;
I true my heart was douf an' wae,
When Jamie gaed awa:
But weel may the boatie row,
And lucky be her part;
And lightsome be the lassie's care,
That yields an honest heart.

When Sawney, Jock, an' Janetie,
Are up and gotten lear,
They'll help to gar the boatie row,
And lighten a' our care:
The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel;
And lightsome be her heart that bears
The murlain, and the creel.

And when wi' age we're worn down,
And hirpling round the door,
They'll row to keep us dry and warm,
As we did them before:—
Then weel may the boatie row,
She wins the bairns bread;
And happy be the lot of a'
That wish the boat to speed!

THE HAPPY MARRIAGE.

Another, but very pretty Anglo-Scottish piece.

* Cast.—The Aberdeenshire dialect.
† An osier basket.

How blest has my time been, what joys have I known,
Since wedlock's soft bondage made Jessy my own!
So joyful my heart is, so easy my chain,
That freedom is tasteless, and roving a pain.

Thro' walks grown with woodbines, as often we stray,
Around us our boys and girls frolic and play:
How pleasing their sport is! the wanton ones see
And borrow their looks from my Jessy and me.

To try her sweet temper, oft times am I seen
In revels all day with the nymphs on the green:
Tho' painful my absence, my doubts she beguiles,
And meets me at night with complacence and smiles.

What tho' on her cheeks the rose loses its hue,
Her wit and good humour bloom all the year thro';
Time still, as he flies, adds increase to her truth,
And gives to her mind what he steals from her youth.

Ye shepherds so gay, who make love to ensnare,
And cheat, with false vows, the too credulous fair;
In search of true pleasure, how vainly you roam!
To hold it for life, you must find it at home.

THE POSIE.

It appears evident to me that Oswald composed his *Roslin Castle* on the modulation of this air.—In the second part of Oswald's, in the three first bars, he has either hit on a wonderful similarity to, or else he has entirely borrowed the three first bars of the old air; and the close of both tunes is almost exactly the same. The old verses to which it was sung, when I took down the notes from a country girl's voice, had no great merit.—The following is a specimen:

There was a pretty May,* and a milkin she went;
Wi' her red rosy cheeks, and her coal-black hair:
And she has met a young man a comin o'er the bent,
With a double and adieu to thee fair May.

O where are ye goin, my ain pretty May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair?
Unto the yowes a milkin, kind sir, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee fair May.
What if I gang alang wi' thee, my ain pretty May,
Wi' thy red rosy cheeks, and thy coal-black hair;
Wad I be aught the warse o' that, kind sir, she says,
With a double and adieu to thee fair May.
&c. &c.

* Maid.

THE POSIE.

O luve will venture in, where it daur na weel be seen,
O luve will venture in, where wisdom ance has been,
But I will down yon river rove, amang the wood sae green,
And a' to pu' a posie to my ain dear May.

The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear,
For she's the pink o' woman kind, and blooms without a peer;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

I'll pu' the budding rose, when Phœbus peeps in view,
For it's like a baumy kiss o' her sweet bonie mou;
The hyacinth's for constancy wi' its unchanging blue,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The lily it is pure, and the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity and unaffected air,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May;

The hawthorn I will pu', wi' its locks o' siller grey,
Where, like an aged man, it stands at break o' day,
But the songster's nest within the bush I winna tak away;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The woodbine I will pu', when the e'ning star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew shall be her e'er sae clear;
The violet's for modesty which weel she fa's to wear,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

I'll tie the posie round wi' the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast, and I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life the band shall ne'er remuve,
And this will be a posie to my ain dear May.

MARY'S DREAM.

THE Mary here alluded to is generally supposed to be Miss Mary Macghie, daughter to the Laird of Airds, in Galloway. The poet was a Mr. *Alexander Lowe*, who likewise wrote another beautiful song, called *Pompey's Ghost*.—I have seen a poetic epistle from him in North America, where he now is, or lately was, to a lady in Scotland.—By the strain of the verses, it appeared that they allude to some love disappointment.

THE moon had climb'd the highest hill,
Which rises o'er the source of Dee,
And from the eastern summet shed
Her silver light on tow'r and tree:
When Mary laid her down to sleep,
Her thoughts on Sandy far at sea;
When soft and low a voice was heard,
Saying, Mary, weep no more for me.

She from her pillow gently rais'd
Her head to ask, who there might be;
She saw young Sandy shiv'ring stand,
With visage pale and hollow eye;
'O Mary, dear, cold is my clay,
'It lies beneath a stormy sea;
'Far, far from thee, I sleep in death;
'So, Mary, weep no more for me.

'Three stormy nights and stormy days
'We toss'd upon the raging main;
'And long we strove our bark to save,
'But all our striving was in vain.
'E'en then when horror chill'd my blood,
'My heart was fill'd with love for thee:
'The storm is past, and I at rest;
'So, Mary, weep no more for me.

'O maiden dear, thyself prepare,
'We soon shall meet upon that shore,
'Where love is free from doubt and care,
'And thou and I shall part no more!'
Loud crow'd the cock, the shadows fled,
No more of Sandy could she see;
But soft the passing spirit said,
"Sweet Mary, weep no more for me!"

THE JOLLY BEGGAR.

SAID to have been composed by King James V., on a frolic of his own.

THERE was a jolly beggar, and a begging he was boun',
And he took up his quarters into a land'art town,
And we'll gang nae mair a roving,
Sae late into the night,
And we'll gang nae mair a roving, boys,
Let the moon shine ne'er sae bright!

He wad neither ly in barn, nor yet wad he in byre,
But in ahint the ha' door, or else afore the fire,
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

The beggar's bed was made at e'en wi' good clean straw and hay,
And in ahint the ha' door, and there the beggar lay,
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

Up raise the good man's dochter, and for to bar the door,
And there she saw the beggar standin i' the floor,
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

He took the lassie in his arms, and to the bed he ran,
O hooly, hooly wi' me, sir, ye'll waken our goodman,
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

The beggar was a cunnin loon, and ne'er a word he spake,
Until he got his turn done, syne he began to crack,
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

Is there ony dogs into this town? maiden, tell me true,
And what wad ye do wi' them, my hinny and my dow?
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

They'll rive a' my mealpocks, and do me meikle wrang,
O dool for the doing o't! are ye the puir man?
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

Then she took up the mealpocks and flang them o'er the wa',
The deil gae wi' the mealpocks, my maidenhead and a',
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

I took ye for some gentleman, at least the laird of Brodie;
O dool for the doing o't! are ye the puir bodie?
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

He took the lassie in his arms, and gae her kisses three,
And four-and-twenty hunder merk to pay the nurice-fee,
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

He took a horn frae his side, and blew baith loud and shrill,
And four-and-twenty belted knights came skipping o'er the hill,
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

And he took out his little knife, loot a' his duddies fa',
And he was the brawest gentleman that was amang them a'.
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

The beggar was a cliver loon, and he lap shoulder height,
O ay for sicken quarters as I gat yesternight!
And we'll gang nae mair, &c.

THE MAID THAT TENDS THE GOATS.

BY MR. DUDGEON.

This Dudgeon is a respectable farmer's son in Berwickshire.

Up amang yon cliffy rocks
Sweetly rings the rising echo,
To the maid that tends the goats,
Lilting o'er her native notes.
Hark! she sings, "Young Sandy's kind,
An' he's promised ay to loe me;
Here's a brooch I ne'er shall tine
Till he's fairly married to me:
Drive away ye drone Time,
An' bring about our bridal day.

"Sandy herds a flock o' sheep,
Aften does he blaw the whistle,
In a strain sae saftly sweet,
Lammies list'ning daurna bleat.
He's as fleet's the mountain roe,
Hardy as the highland heather,
Wading through the winter snow,
Keeping ay his flock together;
But a plaid, wi' bare houghs,
He braves the bleakest norlin blast.

"Brawly he can dance and sing
Canty glee or highland cronach;
Nane can ever match his fling,
At a reel, or round a ring;
Wightly can he wield a rung,
In a brawl he's ay the bangster:
A' his praise can ne'er be sung
By the langest-winded sangster.
Sangs that sing o' Sandy
Come short, though they were e'er sae lang."

TARRY WOO.

This is a very pretty song; but I fancy that the first half stanza, as well as the tune itself, are much older than the rest of the words.

Tarry woo, tarry woo,
Tarry woo is ill to spin;
Card it well, card it well,
Card it well ere ye begin.
When 'tis carded, row'd and spun,
Then the work is haflens done;
But when woven, drest and clean,
It may be cleading for a queen.

Sing, my bonny harmless sheep,
That feed upon the mountain's steep,
Bleating sweetly as ye go,
Thro' the winter's frost and snow;
Hart, and hynd, and fallow-deer,
No be haff so useful are:
Frae kings to him that hads the plow,
Are all oblig'd to tarry woo.

Up, ye shepherds, dance and skip,
O'er the hills and vallies trip,
Sing up the praise of tarry woo,
Sing the flocks that bear it too;
Harmless creatures without blame,
That clead the back, and cram the wame,
Keep us warm and hearty fou;
Leese me on the tarry woo.

How happy is the shepherd's life,
Far frae courts, and free of strife,
While the gimmers bleat and bae,
And the lambkins answer mae:
No such music to his ear;—
Of thief or fox he has no fear;
Sturdy *Kent* and *Colly* true,
Will defend the tarry woo.

He lives content, and envies none;
Not even a monarch on his throne,
Tho' he the royal sceptre sways,
Has not sweeter holidays.
Who'd be a king, can ony tell,
When a shepherd sings sae well?
Sings sae well, and pays his due,
With honest heart and tarry woo.

THE COLLIER'S BONNIE LASSIE.

The first half stanza is much older than the days of Ramsay.—The old words began thus:—

The collier has a dochter, and, O, she's wonder bonnie!
A laird he was that sought her, rich baith in lands and money.
She wad na hae a laird, nor wad she be a lady;
But she wad hae a collier, the color o' her daddie.

The collier has a daughter,
And O she's wonder bonny;
A laird he was that sought her,
Rich baith in lands and money:
The tutors watch'd the motion
Of this young honest lover;
But love is like the ocean;
Wha can its depth discover?

He had the art to please ye,
And was by a' respected;
His airs sat round him easy,
Genteel, but unaffected.
The collier's bonnie lassie,
Fair as the new-blown lilie,
Ay sweet, and never saucy,
Secur'd the heart of Willie.

He lov'd beyond expression
The charms that were about her,
And panted for possession,
His life was dull without her.
After mature resolving,
Close to his breast he held her
In saftest flames dissolving,
He tenderly thus tell'd her:

My bonny collier's daughter,
Let naething discompose ye,
'Tis no your scanty tocher
Shall ever gar me lose ye:
For I have gear in plenty,
And love says, 'Tis my duty
To ware what heav'n has lent me
Upon your wit and beauty.

MY AIN KIND DEARIE—O.

The old words of this song are omitted here, though much more beautiful than these inserted; which were mostly composed by poor Fergusson, in one of his merry humours.—The old words began thus:—

I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O,
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O,
Altho' the night were ne'er sae wat,
And I were ne'er sae weary, O,
I'll rowe thee o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.—

Will ye gang o'er the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O?
And cuddle there sae kindlie,
My ain kind dearie, O?
At thorny dike and birken-tree,
We'll daff and ne'er be weary, O;
They'll scug ill een frae you and me,
My ain kind dearie, O!

Nae herds, wi' kent or colly, there,
Shall ever come to fear ye, O;
But lavrocks, whistling in the air,
Shall woo, like me, their dearie, O.
While others herd their lambs and yowes,
And toil for warld's gear, my jo;
Upon the lea, my pleasure grows,
Wi' thee my kind dearie, O.

DOWN THE BURN, DAVIE.

I have been informed, that the tune of *Down the Burn, Davie*, was the composition of David Maigh, keeper of the blood slough hounds, belonging to the Laird of Riddel, in Tweeddale.

When trees did bud, and fields were green,
And broom bloom'd fair to see;
When Mary was complete fifteen,
And love laugh'd in her e'e;
Blythe Davie's blinks her heart did move,
To speak her mind thus free,
Gang down the burn Davie, love,
And I shall follow thee.

Now Davie did each lad surpass,
That dwalt on yon burn side,
And Mary was the bonniest lass,
Just meet to be a bride;
Her cheeks were rosie, red and white,
Her een were bonnie blue;
Her looks were like Aurora bright,
Her lips like dropping dew.

As down the burn they took their way,
What tender tales they said!
His cheek to her's he aft did lay,
And with her bosom play'd;
. . . . . .
What pass'd, I guess, was harmless play,
And naething sure unmeet;
For, ganging hame, I heard them say,
They lik'd a walk sae sweet;
And that they often should return,
Sic pleasure to renew;
Quoth Mary, Love, I like the burn,
And ay shall follow you.*

BLINK O'ER THE BURN, SWEET BETTY.

The old words, all that I remember, are,—

Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
It is a cauld winter night;
It rains, it hails, it thunders,
The moon she gies nae light:
It's a' for the sake o' sweet Betty,
That ever I tint my way;
Sweet, let me lie beyond thee,
Until it be break o' day.—

O, Betty will bake my bread,
And Betty will brew my ale,
And Betty will be my love,
When I come over the dale:

* The last four lines of the third stanza, being somewhat objectionable in point of delicacy, are omitted. Burns altered these lines. Had his alteration been attended with his usual success, it would have been adopted.

Blink over the burn, sweet Betty,
Blink over the burn to me,
And while I hae life, dear lassie,
My ain sweet Betty thou's be.—

THERE'S NAE LUCK ABOUT THE HOUSE.

This is one of the most beautiful songs in the Scots, or any other language.—The two lines,

And will I see his face again!
And will I hear him speak!

as well as the two preceding ones, are unequalled almost by any thing I ever heard or read: and the lines,

The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw—

are worthy of the first poet.—It is long posterior to Ramsay's days.—About the year 1771, or 72, it came first on the streets as a ballad; and I suppose the composition of the song was not much anterior to that period.*

And are ye sure the news is true?
And are ye sure he's weel?
Is this a time to talk o' wark?
Ye jads, lay by your wheel!
Is this a time to talk of wark,
When Colin's at the door?
Gie me my cloak! I'll to the quay,
And see him come ashore.
For there's nae luck about the house,
There's nae luck ava;
There's little pleasure in the house,
When our gudeman's awa.

Rise up, and mak a clean fire-side,
Put on the muckle pat;
Gie little Kate her cotton gown,
And Jock his Sunday's coat;
And mak their shoon as black as slaes,
Their hose as white as snaw;
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
He likes to see them braw.
For there's nae luck, &c.

There is twa hens upon the bauk,
'Sbeen fed this month and mair;
Mak haste and thraw their necks about,
That Colin weel may fare;
And spread the table neat and clean,
Gar ilka thing look braw;
It's a for love of my gudeman,—
For he's been long awa.
For there's nae luck, &c.

O gie me down my bigonets,
My bishop-satin gown;
For I maun tell the bailie's wife
That Colin's come to town;
My Sunday's shoon they maun gae on,
My hose o' pearl blue,
It's a' to please my ain gudeman,
For he's baith leel and true.
For there's nae luck, &c.

Sae true's his words, sae smooth's his speech,
His breath like caller air,
His very foot has music in't,
When he comes up the stair:
And will I see his face again!
And will I hear him speak!
I'm dowright dizzy with the thought,
In troth I'm like to greet!
For there's nae luck, &c.

The cauld blasts of the winter wind,
That thrilled thro' my heart,
They're a' blaun by; I hae him safe,
'Till death we'll never part;
But what puts parting in my head?
It may be far awa;
The present moment is our ain,
The neist we never saw!
For there's nae luck, &c.

Since Colin's well, I'm well content,
I hae nae mair to crave;
Could I but live to mak him blest,
I'm blest aboon the lave;
And will I see his face again!
And will I hear him speak!
I'm downright dizzy with the though
In troth I'm like to greet!

JOHN HAY'S BONNIE LASSIE.

John Hay's Bonnie Lassie was daughter of John Hay, Earl, or Marquis of Tweeddale, and late Countess Dowager of Roxburgh.—She died at Broomlands, near Kelso, some time between the years 1720 and 1740.

By smooth winding Tay a swain was reclining,
Aft cry'd he, Oh hey! maun I still live pining
Mysel thus away, and daurna discover
To my bonnie Hay that I am her lover!

Nae mair it will hide, the flame waxes stronger;
If she's not my bride, my days are nae langer:
Then I'll take a heart, and try at a venture,
Maybe, ere we part, my vows may content her.

She's fresh as the Spring, and sweet as Aurora,
When birds mount and sing, bidding day a good-morrow;
The swaird of the mead, enamell'd wi' daisies,
Looks wither'd and dead when twin'd of her graces.

* It is now ascertained that Meikle, the translator of Camoens, was the author of this song.

But if she appear where verdure invites her,
The fountains run clear, and flowers smell the sweeter;
'Tis heaven to be by when her wit is a-flowing,
Her smiles and bright eyes set my spirits a-glowing.

The mair that I gaze, the deeper I'm wounded,
Struck dumb wi' amaze, my mind is confounded;
I'm a' in a fire, dear maid, to caress ye,
For a' my desire is Hay's bonnie lassie.

THE BONNIE BRUCKET LASSIE.

THE idea of this song is to me very original: the two first lines are all of it that is old. The rest of the song, as well as those songs in the *Museum* marked *T*, are the works of an obscure, tippling, but extraordinary body of the name of Tytler, commonly known by the name of *Balloon* Tytler, from his having projected a balloon: A mortal, who, though he drudges about Edinburgh as a common printer, with leaky shoes, a sky-lighted hat, and knee-buckles as unlike as George-by-the-Grace-of-God, and Solomon-the Son-of-David; yet that same unknown drunken mortal is author and compiler of three-fourths Elliot's pompous Encyclopedia Britannica, which he composed at half a guinea a week!*

THE bonnie brucket lassie
She's blue beneath the e'en;
She was the fairest lassie
That danced on the green:
A lad he loo'd her dearly,
She did his love return;
But he his vows has broken,
And left her for to mourn.

"My shape," she says, "was handsome,
My face was fair and clean;
But now I'm bonnie brucket,
And blue beneath the e'en:
My eyes were bright and sparkling,
Before that they turn'd blue;
But now they're dull with weeping,
And a', my love, for you.

"My person it was comely,
My shape, they said, was neat;
But now I am quite chang'd,
My stays they winna meet:
A' night I sleeped soundly,
My mind was never sad;
But now my rest is broken,
Wi' thinking o' my lad.

"O could I live in darkness,
Or hide me in the sea,
Since my love is unfaithful,
And has forsaken me!
No other love I suffer'd
Within my breast to dwell;
In nought I have offended,
But loving him too well."

Her lover heard her mourning,
As by he chanc'd to pass,
And press'd unto his bosom
The lovely brucket lass:
"My dear," he said, "cease grieving,
Since that your love's sae true,
My bonnie brucket lassie
I'll faithful prove to you."

SAE MERRY AS WE TWA HA'E BEEN.

THIS song is beautiful.—The chorus in particular is truly pathetic.—I never could learn any thing of its author.

A LASS that was laden with care
Sat heavily under yon thorn;
I listen'd awhile for to hear,
When thus she began for to mourn:
Whene'er my dear shepherd was there,
The birds did melodiously sing,
And cold nipping winter did wear
A face that resembled the spring.
Sae merry as we twa hae been,
Sae merry as we twa hae been,
My heart it is like for to break,
When I think on the days we hae seen.

Our flocks feeding close by his side,
He gently pressing my hand,
I view'd the wide world in its pride,
And laugh'd at the pomp of command!
My dear, he would oft to me say,
What makes you hard-hearted to me?
Oh! why do you thus turn away
From him who is dying for thee?
Sae merry, &c.

But now he is far from my sight,
Perhaps a deceiver may prove,
Which makes me lament day and night,
That ever I granted my love.
At eve, when the rest of the folk
Were merrily seated to spin,
I set myself under an oak,
And heavily sighed for him.
Sae merry, &c.

THE BUSH ABOON TRAQUAIR.

THIS is another beautiful song of Mr. Crawford's composition. In the neighbourhood of Traquair, tradition still shews the old "Bush;" which, when I saw it in the year 1787, was

* Balloon Tytler, is here referred to.

composed of eight or nine ragged birches. The Earl of Traquair has planted a clump of trees near by, which he calls "The New Bush."

Hear me, ye nymphs, and every swain,
I'll tell how Peggy grieves me;
Tho' thus I languish and complain,
Alas! she ne'er believes me.
My vows and sighs, like silent air,
Unheeded never move her;
The bonnie bush aboon Traquair,
Was where I first did love her.

That day she smil'd and made me glad,
No maid seem'd ever kinder;
I thought myself the luckiest lad,
So sweetly there to find her.
I try'd to sooth my am'rous flame,
In words that I thought tender;
If more there pass'd, I'm not to blame,
I meant not to offend her.

Yet now she scornful flees the plain,
The fields we then frequented;
If e'er we meet, she shews disdain,
She looks as ne'er acquainted.
The bonnie bush bloom'd fair in May,
Its sweets I'll ay remember;
But now her frowns make it decay,
It fades as in December.

Ye rural pow'rs, who hear my strains,
Why thus should Peggy grieve me?
Oh! make her partner in my pains,
Then let her smiles relieve me:
If not, my love will turn despair,
My passion no more tender;
I'll leave the bush aboon Traquair,
To lonely wilds I'll wander.

CROMLET'S LILT.

"In the latter end of the 16th century, the Chisholms were proprietors of the estate of Cromlecks (now possessed by the Drummonds). The eldest son of that family was very much attached to a daughter of Sterling of Ardoch, commonly known by the name of Fair Helen of Ardoch.

"At that time the opportunities of meeting betwixt the sexes were more rare, consequently more sought after than now; and the Scottish ladies, far from priding themselves on extensive literature, were thought sufficiently book-learned if they could make out the Scriptures in their mother tongue. Writing was entirely out of the line of female education: At that period the most of our young men of family sought a fortune, or found a grave, in France. Cromlus, when he went abroad to the war, was obliged to leave the management of his correspondence with his mistress to a lay brother of the monastery of Dumblain, in the immediate neighbourhood of Cromleck, and near Ardoch. This man, unfortunately, was deeply sensible of Helen's charms. He artfully prepossessed her with stories to the disadvantage of Cromlus; and by misinterpreting or keeping up the letters and messages intrusted to his care, he entirely irritated both. All connection was broken off betwixt them: Helen was inconsolable, and Cromlus has left behind him, in the ballad called Cromlet's Lilt, a proof of the elegance of his genius, as well as the steadiness of his love.

"When the artful monk thought time had sufficiently softened Helen's sorrow, he proposed himself as a lover: Helen was obdurate: but at last, overcome by the persuasions of her brother with whom she lived, and who, having a family of thirty-one children, was probably very well pleased to get her off his hands, she submitted, rather than consented to the ceremony; but there her compliance ended; and, when forcibly put into bed, she started quite frantic from it, screaming out, that after three gentle taps on the wainscoat, at the bed head, she heard Cromlus's voice, crying, *Helen, Helen, mind me.** Cromlus soon after coming home, the treachery of the confidant was discovered,—her marriage disannulled,—and Helen became lady Cromlecks."

N. B. Marg. Murray, mother to these thirty-one children, was daughter to Murray of Strewn, one of the seventeen sons of Tullybardine, and whose youngest son, commonly called the Tutor of Ardoch, died in the year 1715, aged 111 years.

Since all thy vows, false maid,
Are blown to air,
And my poor heart betray'd
To sad despair,
Into some wilderness,
My grief I will express,
And thy hard-heartedness,
O cruel fair.

Have I not graven our loves
On every tree
In yonder spreading groves,
Tho' false thou be:
Was not a solemn oath
Plighted betwixt us both,
Thou thy faith, I my troth,
Constant to be?

Some gloomy place I'll find,
Some doleful shade,
Where neither sun nor wind
E'er entrance had:
Into that hollow cave,
There will I sigh and rave,
Because thou dost behave
So faithlessly.

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* Remember me.

Wild fruit shall be my meat,
I'll drink the spring,
Cold earth shall be my seat:
For covering
I'll have the starry sky
My head to canopy,
Until my soul on hy
Shall spread its wing.

I'll have no funeral fire,
Nor tears for me:
No grave do I desire,
Nor obsequies:
The courteous *Red-breast* he
With leaves will cover me,
And sing my elegy
With doleful voice.

And when a ghost I am,
I'll visit thee,
O thou deceitful dame,
Whose cruelty
Has kill'd the kindest heart
That e'er felt Cupid's dart,
And never can desert
From loving thee.

MY DEARIE, IF THOU DIE.

ANOTHER beautiful song of Crawford's.

LOVE never more shall give me pain,
My fancy's fix'd on thee,
Nor ever maid my heart shall gain,
My Peggy, if thou die.
Thy beauty doth such pleasure give,
Thy love's so true to me,
Without thee I can never live,
My dearie, if thou die.

If fate shall tear thee from my breast,
How shall I lonely stray!
In dreary dreams the night I'll waste,
In sighs, the silent day.
I ne'er can so much virtue find,
Nor such perfection see;
Then I'll renounce all woman kind,
My Peggy, after thee.

No new-blown beauty fires my heart,
With Cupid's raving rage;
But thine, which can such sweets impart,
Must all the world engage.
'Twas this, that like the morning sun,
Gave joy and life to me;
And when its destin'd day is done,
With Peggy let me die.

Ye powers that smile on virtuous love,
And in such pleasure share;
You who its faithful flames approve,
With pity view the fair:
Restore my Peggy's wonted charms,
Those charms so dear to me!
Oh! never rob them from these arms;
I'm lost if Peggy die.

SHE ROSE AND LET ME IN.

THE old set of this song, which is still to be found in printed collections, is much prettier than this: but somebody, I believe it was Ramsay, took it into his head to clear it of some seeming indelicacies, and made it at once more chaste and more dull.

THE night her silent sable wore,
And gloomy were the skies;
Of glitt'ring stars appear'd no more
Than those in Nelly's eyes.
When at her father's yate I knock'd,
Where I had often been,
She, shrouded only with her smock,
Arose and loot me in.

Fast lock'd within her close embrace,
She trembling stood asham'd;
Her swelling breast, and glowing face,
And ev'ry touch inflam'd.
My eager passion I obey'd,
Resolv'd the fort to win;
And her fond heart was soon betray'd
To yield and let me in.

Then, then, beyond expressing,
Transporting was the joy;
I knew no greater blessing,
So bless'd a man was I.
And she, all ravish'd with delight,
Bid me oft come again;
And kindly vow'd, that ev'ry night
She'd rise and let me in.

But ah! at last she prov'd with bairn,
And sighing sat and dull,
And I that was as much concern'd,
Look'd e'en just like a fool.
Her lovely eyes with tears ran o'er,
Repenting her rash sin:
She sigh'd, and curs'd the fatal hour
That e'er she loot me in.

But who cou'd cruelly deceive,
Or from such beauty part?
I lov'd her so, I could not leave
The charmer of my heart;
But wedded, and conceal'd our crime:
Thus all was well again,
And now she thanks the happy time
That e'er she loot me in.

GO TO THE EWE-BUGHTS, MARION.

I AM not sure if this old and charming air be of the South, as is commonly said, or of the North of Scotland.—There is a song apparently as ancient as *Ewe-Bughts, Marion*, which sings to the same tune, and is evidently of the North.—It begins thus:—

THE Lord o' Gordon had three dochters,
Mary, Marget, and Jean,
They wad na stay at bonnie Castle Gordon,
But awa to Aberdeen.

WILL ye go to the ewe-bughts, Marion,
And wear in the sheep wi' me;
The sun shines sweet, my Marion,
But nae haff sae sweet as thee.
O Marion's a bonny lass,
And the blyth blinks in her e'e;
And fain wad I marry Marion,
Gin Marion wad marry me.

There's gowd in your garters, Marion,
And silk on your white hause-bane;
Fu' fain wad I kiss my Marion,
At e'en when I come hame.
There's braw lads in Earnslaw, Marion,
Wha gape, and glower with their e'e,
At kirk when they see my Marion;
But nane of them lo'es like me.

I've nine milk-ewes, my Marion,
A cow and a brawny quey,
I'll gie them a' to my Marion,
Just on her bridal-day:
And ye's get a green sey apron,
And waistcoat of the London brown,
And wow! but ye will be vap'ring,
Whene'er ye gang to the town.

I'm young and stout, my Marion;
Nane dance like me on the green;
And gin ye forsake me, Marion,
I'll e'en draw up wi' Jean:
Sae put on your pearlins, Marion,
And kyrtle of the cramasie;
And soon as my chin has nae hair on,
I shall come west, and see ye.*

LEWIS GORDON.†

THIS air is a proof how one of our Scots tunes comes to be composed out of another. I have one of the earliest copies of the song, and it has prefixed,

Tune of Tarry Woo.—

Of which tune, a different *set* has insensibly varied into a different air.—To a Scots critic, the pathos of the line,

"Tho' his back be at the wa',"

—must be very striking.—It needs not a Jacobite prejudice to be affected with this song. The supposed author of "*Lewis Gordon*" was a Mr. Geddes, priest, at Shenval, in the Ainzie.

OH! send Lewie Gordon hame,
And the lad I winna name;
Tho' his back be at the wa',
Here's to him that's far awa!
Oh hon! my Highland man,
Oh, my bonny Highland man;
Weel would I my true-love ken,
Amang ten thousand Highland men.

Oh! to see his tartan-trews,
Bonnet blue, and laigh-heel'd shoes;
Philabeg aboon his knee;
That's the lad that I'll gang wi'!
Oh hon, &c.

The princely youth that I do mean,
Is fitted for to be a king:
On his breast he wears a star;
You'd tak him for the God of War
Oh hon, &c.

Oh to see this Princely One,
Seated on a royal throne!
Disasters a' would disappear,
Then begins the Jub'lee year!
Oh hon, &c.

OH ONO CHRIO.

DR. BLACKLOCK informed me that this song was composed on the infamous massacre of Glencoe.

OH! was not I a weary wight!
Oh! ono chri, oh! ono chri—
Maid, wife, and widow, in one night!
When in my soft and yielding arms,
O! when most I thought him free from harms.
Even at the dead time of the night,
They broke my bower, and slew my knight.
With ae lock of his jet-black hair,
I'll tie my heart for evermair;
Nae sly-tongued youth, or flatt'ring swain,
Shall e'er untye this knot again;
Thine still, dear youth, that heart shall be,
Nor pant for aught, save heaven and thee.

(The chorus repeated at the end of each line).

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* This is marked in the *Tea Table Miscellany* as an old song with additions.—*Ed.*

† "Lord Lewis Gordon, younger brother to the then Duke of Gordon, commanded a detachment for the Chevalier, and acquitted himself with great gallantry and judgment. He died in 1751."

THE BEDS OF SWEET ROSES.

This song, as far as I know, for the first time appears here in print.—When I was a boy, it was a very popular song in Ayrshire. I remember to have heard those fanatics, the Buchanites, sing some of their nonsensical rhymes, which they dignify with the name of hymns, to this air.—Burns.

As I was a walking
One morning in May,
The small birds sang sweetly,
The flowers were bloomin' gay,
Oh there I met my true love,
As fresh as dawnin' day,
Down among the beds of sweet roses.

Fu' white was her barefoot,
New bathed in the dew;
Whiter was her white hand,
Her een were bonnie blue;
And kind were her whispers,
And sweet was her moo,
Down among the beds o' sweet roses.

My father and my mother,
I wot they told me true,
That I liked ill to thrash,
And I like worse to plough;
But I vow the maidens like me,
For I kend the way to woo,
Down among the beds of sweet roses.

CORN RIGS ARE BONNY.

My Patie is a lover gay,
His mind is never muddy,
His breath is sweeter than new hay,
His face is fair and ruddy.
His shape is handsome, middle size;
He's stately in his wawking;
The shining of his een surprise;
'Tis heaven to hear him tawking.

Last night I met him on a bawk,
Where yellow corn was growing,
There mony a kindly word he spake,
That set my heart a-glowing.
He kiss'd, and vow'd he wad be mine,
And loo'd me best of ony;
That gars me like to sing sinsyne,
O corn rigs are bonny.

Let maidens of a silly mind
Refuse what maist they're wanting,
Since we for yielding are design'd,
We chastely should be granting;
Then I'll comply and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony
He's free to touzle air or late,
Where corn rigs are bonny.

All the old words that ever I could meet with to this air were the following, which seem to have been an old chorus.

O corn rigs and rye rigs,
O corn rigs are bonnie;
And where'er you meet a bonnie lass,
Preen up her cockernony.

WAUKIN O' THE FAULD.

There are two stanzas still sung to this tune, which I take to be the original song whence Ramsay composed his beautiful song of that name in the *Gentle Shepherd.*—It begins,

O will ye speak at our town,
As ye come frae the fauld, &c.

I regret that, as in many of our old songs, the delicacy of this old fragment is not equal to its wit and humour.

My Peggy is a young thing,
Just enter'd in her teens,
Fair as the day, and sweet as May,
Fair as the day, and always gay.
My Peggy is a young thing,
And I'm not very auld,
Yet well I like to meet her at
The wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
Whene'er we meet alane,
I wish nae mair to lay my care,
I wish nae mair of a' that's rare,
My Peggy speaks sae sweetly,
To a' the lave I'm cauld;
But she gars a' my spirits glow,
At wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
Whene'er I whisper love,
That I look down on a' the town,
That I look down upon a crown,
My Peggy smiles sae kindly,
It makes me blythe and bauld,
And naething gi'es me sic delight,
As wauking of the fauld.

My Peggy sings sae saftly,
When on my pipe I play;
By a' the rest it is confest,
By a' the rest, that she sings best.
My Peggy sings sae saftly,
And in her sangs are tald,
With innocence, the wale of sense,
At wauking of the fauld.

MAGGIE LAUDER.

This old song, so pregnant with Scottish *naivieté* and energy, is much relished by all ranks, notwithstanding its broad wit and palpable allusions.—Its language is a precious model of imitation: sly, sprightly, and forcibly expressive.—Maggie's tongue wags out the nicknames of Rob the Piper with all the careless lightsomeness of unrestrained gaiety.

Wha wad na be in love
Wi' bonny Maggie Lauder?
A piper met her gaun to Fife,
And speir'd what was't they ca'd her;—
Right scornfully she answer'd him,
Begone, you hallanshaker!
Jog on your gate, you bladderskate,
My name is Maggie Lauder.

Maggie, quo' he, and by my bags,
I'm fidgin' fain to see thee;
Sit down by me, my bonny bird,
In troth I winna steer thee:
For I'm a piper to my trade,
My name is Rob the Ranter;
The lasses loup as they were daft,
When I blaw up my chanter.

Piper, quo' Meg, hae ye your bags?
Or is your drone in order?
If ye be Rob, I've heard o' you,
Live you upo' the border?
The lasses a', baith far and near,
Have heard o' Rob the Ranter;
I'll shake my foot wi' right gude will,
Gif you'll blaw up your chanter.

Then to his bags he flew wi' speed,
About the drone he twisted;
Meg up and wallop'd o'er the green,
For brawly could she frisk it.
Weel done! quo' he—play up! quo' she;
Weel bobb'd! quo' Rob the Ranter;
'Tis worth my while to play indeed,
When I hae sic a dancer.

Weel hae ye play'd your part, quo' Meg,
Your cheeks are like the crimson;
There's nane in Scotland plays sae weel,
Since we lost Habbie Simpson.
I've liv'd in Fife, baith maid and wife,
These ten years and a quarter;
Gin' ye should come to Enster Fair,
Speir ye for Maggie Lauder.

TRANENT MUIR.

Tune—"Killierankie."

"Tranent-Muir" was composed by a Mr. Skirvin, a very worthy respectable farmer, near Haddington. I have heard the anecdote often, that Lieutenant Smith, whom he mentions in the ninth stanza, came to Haddington after the publication of the song, and sent a challenge to Skirvin to meet him at Haddington, and answer for the unworthy manner in which he had noticed him in his song. "Gang awa back," said the honest farmer, "and tell Mr. Smith that I hae na leisure to come to Haddington; but tell him to come here; and I'll tak a look o' him; and if I think I'm fit to fecht him, I'll fecht him; and if no—I'll do as he did,—*I'll rin awa.*"—

The Chevalier, being void of fear,
Did march up Birsle brae, man,
And thro' Tranent, e'er he did stent,
As fast as he could gae, man:
While General Cope did taunt and mock,
Wi' mony a loud huzza, man;
But e'er next morn proclaim'd the cock,
We heard another craw, man.

The brave Lochiel, as I heard tell,
Led Camerons on in clouds, man;
The morning fair, and clear the air,
They loos'd with devilish thuds, man:
Down guns they threw, and swords they drew,
And soon did chace them aff, man;
On Seaton-Crafts they buft their chafts,
And gart them rin like daft, man.

The bluff dragoons swore blood and 'oons,
They'd make the rebels run, man;
And yet they flee when them they see,
And winna fire a gun, man:
They turn'd their back, the foot they brake,
Such terror seiz'd them a', man;
Some wet their cheeks, some fyl'd their breeks,
And some for fear did fa', man.

The volunteers prick'd up their ears,
And vow gin they were crouse, man;
But when the bairns saw't turn to earn'st,
They were not worth a louse, man;
Maist feck gade hame; O fy for shame!
They'd better stay'd awa', man,
Than wi' cockade to make parade,
And do nae good at a', man.

Menteith the great,* when hersell sh—t,
Un'wares did ding him o'er, man;
Yet wad nae stand to bear a hand,
But aff fou fast did scour, man;
O'er Soutra hill, e'er he stood still,
Before he tasted meat, man:
Troth he may brag of his swift nag,
That bare him aff sae fleet, man.

* The minister of Longformacus, a volunteer; who, happening to come the night before the battle, upon a Highland gelding, easing nature at Preston, threw him over, and carried his gun as a trophy to Cope's camp.

And Simpson * keen, to clear the een
Of rebels far in wrang, man,
Did never strive wi' pistols five,
But gallop'd with the thrang, man:
He turn'd his back, and in a crack
Was cleanly out of sight, man;
And thought it best; it was nae jest
Wi' Highlanders to fight, man.

'Mangst a' the gang nane bade the bang
But twa, and ane was tane, man;
For Campbell rade, but Myrie† staid,
And sair he paid the kain,‡ man;
Fell skelps he got, was war than shot
Frae the sharp-edg'd claymore, man;
Frae many a spout came running out
His reeking-het red gore, man.

But Gard'ner || brave did still behave
Like to a hero bright, man;
His courage true, like him were few,
That still despised flight, man;
For king and laws, and country's cause,
In honour's bed he lay, man;
His life, but not his courage, fled,
While he had breath to draw, man.

And Major Bowle, that worthy soul,
Was brought down to the ground, man;
His horse being shot, it was his lot
For to get mony a wound, man:
Lieutenant Smith, of Irish birth,
Frae whom he call'd for aid, man,
Being full of dread, lap o'er his head,
And wadna be gainsaid, man.

He made sic haste, sae spur'd his beast,
'Twas little there he saw, man;
To Berwick rade, and safely said,
The Scots were rebels a', man;
But let that end, for well 'tis kend
His use and wont to lie, man;
The Teague is naught, he never faught,
When he had room to flee, man.

And Caddell drest, amang the rest,
With gun and good claymore, man,
On gelding grey he rode that way,
With pistols set before, man;
The cause was good, he'd spend his blood,
Before that he would yield, man;
But the night before he left the cor,
And never fac'd the field, man.

But gallant Roger, like a soger,
Stood and bravely fought, man;
I'm wae to tell, at last he fell,
But mae down wi' him brought, man:
At point of death, wi' his last breath,
(Some standing round in ring, man),
On's back lying flat, he wav'd his hat,
And cry'd, God save the king, man.

Some Highland rogues, like hungry dogs,
Neglecting to pursue, man,
About they fac'd, and in great haste
Upon the booty flew, man;
And they, as gain, for all their pain,
Are deck'd wi spoils of war, man;
Fow bald can tell how her nainsell
Was ne'er sae pra before, man.

At the thorn-tree, which you may see
Bewest the meadow-mill, man;
There mony slain lay on the plain,
The clans pursuing still, man.
Sic unco' hacks, and deadly whacks,
I never saw the like, man;
Lost hands and heads cost them their deads,
That fell near Preston-dyke, man.

That afternoon, when a' was done,
I gaed to see the fray, man;
But had I wist what after past,
I'd better staid away, man:
On Seaton sands, wi' nimble hands,
They pick'd my pockets bare, man;
But I wish ne'er to drie sic fear,
For a' the sum and mair, man.

---

* Another volunteer Presbyterian minister, who said he would convince the rebels of their error by the dint of his pistols; having, for that purpose, two in his pockets, two in his holsters, and one in his belt.

† Mr. Myrie was a student of physic, from Jamaica; he entered as a volunteer in Cope's army, and was miserably mangled by the broadsword.

‡ *i. e.* He suffered severely in the cause.

|| James Gardiner, Colonel of a regiment of horse. This gentleman's conduct, however celebrated, does not seem to have proceeded so much from the generous ardour of a noble and heroic mind, as from a spirit of religious enthusiasm, and a bigoted reliance on the Presbyterian doctrine of predestination, which rendered it a matter of perfect indifference whether he left the field or remained in it. Being deserted by his troop, he was killed by a Highlander, with a Lochaber axe.

Colonel Gardiner having, when a gay young man, at Paris, made an assignation with a lady, was, as he pretended, not only deterred from keeping his appointment, but thoroughly reclaimed from all such thoughts in future, by an apparition. See his Life by Doddridge.

STREPHON AND LYDIA.

Tune—"The Gordon's had the Guiding o't."

THE following account of this song I had from Dr. Blacklock.

The Strephon and Lydia mentioned in the song were perhaps the loveliest couple of their time. The gentleman was commonly known by the name of Beau Gibson. The lady was the *Gentle Jean*, celebrated somewhere in Mr. Hamilton of Bangour's poems.—Having frequently met at public places, they had formed a reciprocal attachment, which their friends thought dangerous, as their resources were by no means adequate to their tastes and habits of life. To elude the bad consequences of such a connection, Strephon was sent abroad with a

commission, and perished in Admiral Vernon's expedition to Carthagena.

The author of the song was William Wallace, Esq. of Cairnhill, in Ayrshire.—Burns.

All lovely on the sultry beach,
Expiring Strephon lay,
No hand the cordial draught to reach,
Nor chear the gloomy way.
Ill-fated youth! no parent nigh,
To catch thy fleeting breath,
No bride, to fix thy swimming eye,
Or smooth the face of death.

Far distant from the mournful scene,
Thy parents sit at ease,
Thy Lydia rifles all the plain,
And all the spring to please.
Ill-fated youth! by fault of friend,
Not force of foe depress'd,
Thou fall'st, alas! thyself, thy kind,
Thy country, unredress'd!

I'M O'ER YOUNG TO MARRY YET.

The chorus of this song is old.—The rest of it, such as it is, is mine.—Burns.

I'm o'er young, I'm o'er young,
I'm o'er young to marry yet;
I'm o'er young, 'twad be a sin
To take me frae my mammy yet.

There is a stray, characteristic verse, which ought to be restored.

My minnie coft me a new gown,
The kirk maun hae the gracing o't;
Ware I to lie wi' you, kind Sir,
I'm feared ye'd spoil the lacing o't.
I'm o'er young, &c.

MY JO, JANET.

Johnson, the publisher, with a foolish delicacy, refused to insert the last stanza of this humorous ballad.—Burns.

Sweet Sir, for your courtesie,
When ye come by the *Bass* then,
For the luve ye bear to me,
Buy me a keeking-glass, then.—
Keek into the draw-well,
Janet, Janet;
And there ye'll see your bonny sell,
My Jo, Janet.

Keeking in the draw-well clear,
What if I should fa' in,
Syne a' my kin will say and swear,
I drown'd mysell for sin.—
Haud the better be the brae,
Janet, Janet,
Haud the better be the brae,
My Jo, Janet.

Good Sir, for your courtesie,
Coming through *Aberdeen*, then,
For the luve ye bear to me,
Buy me a pair of sheen, then.—
Clout the auld, the new are dear,
Janet, Janet;
Ae pair may gain ye ha'f a year,
My Jo, Janet.

But what if dancing on the green,
And skipping like a maukin,
If they should see my clouted shoon,
Of me they will be taukin'.—
Dance ay laigh, and late at e'en,
Janet, Janet;
Syne a' their faults will no be seen,
My Jo, Janet.

Kind Sir, for your courtesie,
When ye gae to the *Cross*, then,
For the luve ye bear to me,
Buy me a pacing-horse, then.—
Pace upo' your spinning-wheel,
Janet, Janet;
Pace upo' your spinning-wheel,
My Jo, Janet.

My spinning-wheel is auld and stiff,
The rock o't winna stand, Sir,
To keep the temper-pin in tiff,
Employs right aft my hand, Sir.—
Mak the best o't that ye can,
Janet, Janet;
But like it never wale a man,
My Jo, Janet.

GUDE YILL COMES, AND GUDE YILL GOES.

This song sings to the tune called *The bottom of the punch bowl*, of which a very good copy may be found in *M'Gibbon's Collection*.—Burns.

Tune—"The Happy Farmer."

O gude yill comes, and gude yill goes,
Gude yill gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
For gude yill keeps my heart aboon.

I had sax owsen in a pleugh,
And they drew teugh and weel eneugh;
I drank them a' ane by ane,
For gude yill keeps my heart aboon.
Gude yill, &c.

I had forty shillin in a clout,
Gude yill gart me pyke them out;

That gear should moule I thought a sin,
Gude yill keeps my heart aboon.
Gude yill, &c.

The meikle pot upon my back,
Unto the yill-house I did pack;
It melted a' wi' the heat o' the moon,
Gude yill keeps my heart aboon.
Gude yill, &c.

Gude yill hauds me bare and busy,
Gars me moop wi' the servant hizzie,
Stand in the kirk when I hae done,
Gude yill keeps my heart aboon.*
Gude yill, &c.

I wish their fa' may be a gallows,
Winna gie gude yill to gude fellows,
And keep a soup 'till the afternoon,
Gude yill keeps my heart aboon.
O gude yill comes, and gude yill goes,
Gude yill gars me sell my hose,
Sell my hose, and pawn my shoon,
Gude yill keeps my heart aboon.

WERE NA MY HEART LIGHT I WAD DIE.

Lord Hailes, in the notes to his collection of ancient Scots poems, says that this song was the composition of a Lady Grissel Baillie, daughter of the first Earl of Marchmont, and wife of George Baillie, of Jerviswood.—Burns.

There was anes a May, and she loo'd na men,
She biggit her bonny bow'r down in yon glen;
But now she cries dool! and a well-a-day!
Come down the green gate, and come here away.
But now she cries, &c.

When bonny young Johny came o'er the sea,
He said he saw naithing sae lovely as me;
He hecht me baith rings and mony braw things;
And were na my heart light I wad die.
He hecht me, &c.

He had a wee titty that loo'd na me,
Because I was twice as bonny as she;
She rais'd such a pother 'twixt him and his mother,
That were na my heart light, I wad die.
She rais'd, &c.

The day it was set, and the bridal to be,
The wife took a dwam, and lay down to die;
She main'd and she grain'd out of dolour and pain,
Till he vow'd he never wad see me again.
She main'd &c.

His kin was for ane of a higher degree,
Said, What had he to do with the like of me?
Albeit I was bonny, I was na for Johny:
And were na my heart light, I wad die.
Albeit I was, &c.

They said, I had neither cow nor caff,
Nor dribbles of drink rins throw the draff,
Nor pickles of meal rins throw the mill-ee;
And were na my heart light, I wad die.
Nor pickles of, &c.

His titty she was baith wylie and slee,
She spy'd me as I came o'er the lee;
And then she ran in and made a loud din,
Believe your ain een, an ye trow na me.
And then she, &c.

His bonnet stood ay fou round on his brow;
His auld ane looks ay as well as some's new:
But now he lets't wear ony gate it will hing,
And casts himself dowie upon the corn-bing.
But now he, &c.

And now he gaes 'dandering' about the dykes,
And a' he dow do is to hund the tykes:
The live-lang night he ne'er steeks his ee,
And were na my heart light, I wad die.
The live-lang, &c.

Were I young for thee, as I hae been,
We shou'd hae been galloping down on yon green,
And linking it on the lily-white lee;
And wow gin I were but young for thee!
And linking &c.

MARY SCOTT, THE FLOWER OF YARROW.

Mr. Robertson, in his statistical account of the parish of Selkirk, says, that Mary Scott, the Flower of Yarrow, was descended from the Dry hope, and married into the Harden family. Her daughter was married to a predecessor of the present Sir Francis Elliot of Stobbs, and of the late Lord Heathfield.

There is a circumstance in their contract of marriage that merits attention, as it strongly marks the predatory spirit of the times.—The father-in-law agrees to keep his daughter, for some time after the marriage; for which the son-in-law binds himself to give him the profits of the first Michaelmas-moon.—Burns.

Happy's the love which meets return,
When in soft flames souls equal burn;
But words are wanting to discover
The torments of a hopeless lover.
Ye registers of heav'n, relate,
If looking o'er the rolls of fate,
Did you there see me mark'd to marrow
Mary Scott the flower of Yarrow?

* The hand of Burns is visible here. The 1st and 4th verses only are the original ones.

Ah no! her form's too heav'nly fair,
Her love the gods above must share;
While mortals with despair explore her,
And at distance due adore her.
O lovely maid! my doubts beguile,
Revive and bless me with a smile:
Alas! if not, you'll soon debar a
Sighing swain the banks of Yarrow.

Be hush, ye fears, I'll not despair;
My Mary's tender as she's fair;
Then I'll go tell her all mine anguish,
She is too good to let me languish:
With success crown'd, I'll not envy
The folks who dwell above the sky;
When Mary Scott's become my marrow,
We'll make a paradise in Yarrow.

THE HIGHLAND QUEEN.

The Highland Queen, music and poetry, was composed by a Mr. M'Vicar, purser of the Solbay man of war.—This I had from Dr. Blacklock.—Burns.

Tune—"The Highland Queen."

No more my song shall be, ye swains,
Of purling streams or flowrie plains:
More pleasing beauties now inspire,
And Phœbus deigns the warbling lyre.
Divinely aided, thus I mean
To celebrate, to celebrate,
To celebrate my Highland Queen.

In her sweet innocence you'll find
With freedom, truth and virtue join'd:
Strict honour fills her spotless soul,
And gives a lustre to the whole.
A matchless shape and lovely mein
All centre in, all centre in,
All centre in my Highland Queen.

No sordid wish or trifling joy
Her settled calm of mind destroy;
From pride and affectation free,
Alike she smiles on you and me.
The brightest nymph that trips the green
I do pronounce, I do pronounce,
I do pronounce my Highland Queen.

How blest the youth, whose gentle fate
Has destined to so fair a mate,
With all those wondrous gifts in store,
To which each coming day brings more.
No man more happy can be seen
Possessing thee, possessing thee,
Possessing thee, my Highland Queen.

THE MUCKIN' O' GEORDIE'S BYRE.

The chorus of this song is old.—The rest is the work of Balloon Tytler.*—Burns.

Tune—"The Muckin' o' Geordie's Byre."

The muckin' o' Geordie's byre,
And the shool an' the graip sae clean,
Has gar'd me weet my cheeks,
And greet wi' baith my een.
It was ne'er my father's will,
Nor yet my mither's desire,
That e'er I should fyle my fingers
Wi' muckin' o' Geordie's byre.

The mouse is a merry beast,
The moudiwort wants the een,
But the warld shall ne'er get wit,
Sae merry as we hae been.
It was ne'er my father's will,
Nor yet my mither's desire,
That e'er I should fyle my fingers
Wi' muckin' o' Geordie's byre.

MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL;

ALSO KNOWN AS

MACPHERSON'S RANT.

He was a daring robber in the beginning of this (eighteenth) century—was condemned to be hanged at Inverness. He is said, when under sentence of death, to have composed this tune, which he called his own Lament, or Farewell.

Gow has published a variation of this fine tune, as his own composition, which he calls "The Princess Augusta."—Burns.

I've spent my time in rioting,
Debauch'd my health and strength:
I've pillaged, plundered, murdered,
But now, alas! at length
I'm brought to punishment direct:
Pale death draws near to me;
This end I never did project
To hang upon a tree.

To hang upon a tree, a tree,
That cursed unhappy death;
Like to a wolf to worried be,
And choaked in the breath:
My very heart would surely break
When this I think upon,
Did not my courage singular
Bid pensive thoughts begone.

* A singularly learned but unhappy person. He lived at too early a stage of the world: before there was toleration in Britain, which he was obliged to quit (1793) because of his democratical writings: when he took refuge at Salem as a newspaper editor. He also lived before there were Temperance Societies any where.

No man on earth, that draweth breath,
More courage had than I:
I dared my foes unto their face,
And would not from them fly.
This grandeur stout, I did keep out,
Like Hector, manfully:
Then wonder one like me so stout
Should hang upon a tree.

The Egyptian band I did command,
With courage more by far,
Than ever did a general
His soldiers in the war.
Being feared by all, both great and small,
I liv'd most joyfullie:
Oh, curse upon this fate o' mine,
To hang upon a tree.

As for my life I do not care,
If justice would take place,
And bring my fellow-plunderers
Unto the same disgrace:
But Peter Brown, that notour loon,
Escaped and was made free:
Oh, curse upon this fate o' mine,
To hang upon a tree.

Both law and justice buried are,
And fraud and guile succeed;
The guilty pass unpunished,
If money intercede.
The Laird o' Grannt, that Highland Saunt,
His mighty majestie,
He pleads the cause of Peter Brown,
And lets Macpherson die.

The destiny of my life contrived,
By those whom I obliged,
Rewarded me much ill for good,
And left me no refuge:
But Braco Duff, in rage enough,
He first laid hands on me;
And if that death would not prevent,
Avenged would I be.

As for my life, it is but short,
When I shall be no more;
To part with life, I am content,
As any heretofore.
Therefore, good people all, take heed,
This warning take by me—
According to the lives you lead,
Rewarded you shall be.*

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY.

The chorus of this is old; the two stanzas are mine.

Up in the morning's no for me,
Up in the morning early;
When a' the hills are cover'd wi' snaw,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Cold blaws the wind frae east to west,
The drift is driving sairly;
Sae loud and shrill's I hear the blast,
I'm sure it's winter fairly.

Burns.

UP IN THE MORNING EARLY

BY JOHN HAMILTON.

Cauld blaws the wind frae north to south,
The drift is driving sairly,
The sheep are courin' in the heuch:
O, sirs, its winter fairly.
Now up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
I'd rather gae supperless to my bed
Than rise in the mornin' early.

Loud roars the blast amang the woods,
And tirls the branches barely;
On hill and house hear how it thuds,
The frost is nipping sairly.
Now up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
To sit a' nicht wad better agree
Than rise in the mornin' early.

The sun peeps ower yon southland hills
Like ony timorous carlie,
Just blinks a wee, then sinks again,
And that we find severely.
Now up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in in the mornin' early;
When snaw blaws in at the chimly cheek,
Wha'd rise in the mornin' early.

Nae linties lilt on hedge or bush;
Poor things they suffer sairly,
In cauldrife quarters a' the night,
A' day they feed but sparely.
Now up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
A pennyless purse I wad rather dree
Than rise in the mornin' early.

A cozie house and canty wife,
Aye keep a body cheerly;
And pantries stou'd wi' meat and drink,
They answer unco rarely.
But up in the mornin's no for me,
Up in the mornin' early;
The gowan maun glint on bank and brae,
When I rise in the mornin' early

---

* Burns' own set of the Lament, appears liker the natural effusions of the high-spirited criminal, than this homily.

GALA-WATER.

I HAVE heard a concluding verse sung to these words—it is,

An' ay she came at e'enin fa',
Amang the yellow broom, sae eerie,
To seek the snood o' silk she tint ;—
She fan na it, but gat her dearie.—BURNS.

The original song of Gala-water was thus recited by a resident in that very pastoral district.

BONNIE lass of Gala-water ;
Braw, braw lass of Gala-water !
I would wade the stream sae deep,
For yon braw lass of Gala-water.

Braw, braw lads of Gala-water ;
O, braw lads of Gala-water !
I'll kilt my coat aboon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

Sae fair her hair, sae brent her brow,
Sae bonnie blue her een, my dearie ;
Sae white her teeth, sae sweet her mou',
I often kiss her till I'm wearie.

O'er yon bank, and o'er yon brae,
O'er yon moss amang the heather ;
I'll kilt my coat aboon my knee,
And follow my love thro' the water.

Down amang the broom, the broom,
Down amang the broom, my dearie ;
The lassie lost her silken snood,
That gart her greet till she was wearie.

DUMBARTON DRUMS.

THIS is the last of the West Highland airs ; and from it, over the whole tract of country to the confines of Tweedside, there is hardly a tune or song that one can say has taken its origin from any place or transaction in that part of Scotland.—The oldest Ayrshire reel, is *Stewarton Lasses*, which was made by the father of the present Sir Walter Montgomery Cunningham, alias Lord Lyle ; since which period there has indeed been local music in that country in great plenty.—*Johnie Faa* is the only old song which I could ever trace as belonging to the extensive county of Ayr.—BURNS.

The poet has fallen under a mistake here :—the drums here celebrated were not those of the town, or garrison of Dumbarton ; but of the regiment commanded by Lord Dumbarton—a cavalier of the house of Douglas—who signalized himself on the Jacobite side in 1685.—The old song was as follows :—

DUMBARTON's drums beat bonny, O,
When they mind me of my dear Johnie, O.
How happy am I,
When my soldier is by,
While he kisses and blesses his Annie, O !
'Tis a soldier alone can delight me, O,
For his graceful looks do invite me, O :
While guarded in his arms,
I'll fear no war's alarms,
Neither danger nor death shall e'er fright me, O.

My love is a handsome laddie, O,
Genteel, but ne'er foppish nor gaudy, O :
Tho' commissions are dear,
Yet I'll buy him one this year ;
For he shall serve no longer a cadie, O.
A soldier has honour and bravery, O,
Unacquainted with rogues and their knavery, O:
He minds no other thing
But the ladies or the king ;
For ev'ry other care is but slavery, O.

Then I'll be the captain's lady, O ;
Farewell all my friends and my daddy, O :
I'll wait no more at home,
But I'll follow with the drum,
And whene'er that beats, I'll be ready, O.
Dumbarton's drums sound bonny, O,
They are sprightly like my dear Johnie, O :
How happy shall I be,
When on my soldier's knee,
And he kisses and blesses his Annie, O !

FOR LACK OF GOLD.

THE country girls in Ayrshire, instead of the line

She me forsook for a great duke,

say,

For Athole's duke she me forsook ;

which I take to be the original reading.

These words were composed by the late Dr. Austin, physician at Edinburgh.—He had courted a lady,* to whom he was shortly to have been married : but the Duke of Athole having seen her, became so much in love with her, that he made proposals of marriage, which were accepted of, and she jilted the Doctor.—BURNS.

DR. AUSTIN.

Tune—"For Lack of Gold."

FOR lack of gold she has left me, O ;
And of all that's dear she's bereft me, O ;
She me forsook for Athole's duke,
And to endless wo she has left me, O.
A star and garter have more art
Than youth, a true and faithful heart ;

* Jean, daughter of John Drummond, of Meggginch, Esq.

For empty titles we must part;
For glittering show she has left me, O.

No cruel fair shall ever move
My injur'd heart again to love;
Thro' distant climates I must rove,
Since Jeany she has left me, O.
Ye powers above, I to your care
Resign my faithless lovely fair;
Your choicest blessings be her share,
Tho' she has ever left me, O!

MILL, MILL O.

THE original, or at least a song evidently prior to Ramsay's, is still extant.—It runs thus:

The mill, mill O, and the kill, kill O,
And the coggin o' Peggy's wheel O,
The sack and the sieve, and a' she did leave,
And danc'd the miller's reel O.

As I cam down yon waterside,
And by yon shellin-hill O,
There I spied a bonnie bonnie lass,
And a lass that I lov'd right weel O.—*

. . . . . .—BURNS.

MILL, MILL O.

BENEATH a green shade I fand a fair maid
Was sleeping sound and still-O,
A' lowing wi' love, my fancy did rove,
Around her with good will-O:
Her bosom I press'd, but, sunk in her rest,
She stir'd na my joy to spill-O;
While kindly she slept, close to her I crept,
And kiss'd, and kiss'd her my fill-O.

Oblig'd by command in Flanders to land,
T' employ my courage and skill-O,
Frae 'er quietly I staw, hoist'd sails and awa,
For wind blew fair on the hill-O.
Twa years brought me hame, where loud-frasing fame
Tald me with a voice right shrill-O,
My lass, like a fool, had mounted the stool,
Nor ken'd wha'd done her the ill-O.

Mair fond of her charms, with my son in her arms,
A ferlying speer'd how she fell-O;
Wi' the tear in her eye, quoth she, let me die,
Sweet Sir, gin I can tell-O.

Love gae the command, I took her by the hand,
And bad her a' fears expel-O,
And nae mair look wan, for I was the man
Wha had done her the deed mysell-O.

My bonnie sweet lass, on the gowany grass,
Beneath the shilling-hill-O,
If I did offence, I'se make ye amends,
Before I leave Peggy's mill-O.
O! the mill, mill-O, and the kill, kill-O,
And the cogging of the wheel-O,
The sack and the sieve, a' thae ye man leave,
And round with a soger reel-O.

WALY, WALY.

IN the west country I have heard a different edition of the second stanza.—Instead of the four lines, beginning with, "*When cockle-shells,*" &c. the other way ran thus:—

O WHEREFORE need I busk my head,
Or wherefore need I kame my hair,
Sin my fause luve has me forsook,
And says he'll never luve me mair.—
BURNS.

O WALY waly up the bank,
And waly waly down the brae,
And waly waly by yon burn-side,
Where I and my love were wont to gae.
I leant my back unto an aik,
I thought it was a trustie trie;
But first it bow'd, and syne it brake,
And sae my true love did lyghtlie me.

O waly waly gin love be bonnie
A little time while it is new;
But when its auld it waxeth cauld,
And fades awa' like morning-dew.
O wherefore shu'd I busk my head?
Or wherefore shu'd I kame my hair?
For my true love has me forsook,
And says he'll never loe me mair.

Now Arthur-seat shall be my bed,
The sheits shall neir be fyl'd by me:
Saint Anton's well sall be my drink,
Since my true love has forsaken me.
Marti'mas wind, whan wilt thou blaw,
And shake the green leaves aff the trie?
O gentle death, whan wilt thou cum?
For of my life I am wearie.

'Tis not the frost that freezes fell,
Nor blawing snaw's inclemencie;
'Tis not sic cauld that makes me cry,
But my love's heart grown cauld to me.
Whan we came in by Glasgowe town,
We were a comely sight to see;

* The remaining two stanzas, though pretty enough, partake rather too much of the rude simplicity of the "Olden time" to be admitted here.—*Ed.*

My love was clad i' th' black velvet,
And I mysell in cramasie.

But had I wist before I kisst,
That love had been sae ill to win,
I had lockt my heart in a case of gowd,
And pinn'd it wi' a siller pin.
Oh, oh! if my young babe were borne,
And set upon the nurse's knee,
And I mysell were dead and gone,
For a maid again Ile never be!

TODLEN HAME.

This is, perhaps, the first bottle song that ever was composed.—Burns.

When I've a saxpence under my thumb,
Then I'll get credit in ilka town:
But ay when I'm poor they bid me gae by;
O! poverty parts good company.
Todlen hame, todlen hame,
Coudna my loove come todlen hame?

Fair-fa' the goodwife, and send her good sale,
She gi'es us white bannocks to drink her ale,
Syne if her tippony chance to be sma',
We'll tak a good scour o't, and ca't awa'.
Todlen hame, todlen hame,
As round as a neep, come todlen hame.

My kimmer and I lay down to sleep,
And twa pintstoups at our bed-feet;
And ay when we waken'd, we drank them dry:
What think ye of my wee kimmer and I?
Todlen but, and todlen ben,
Sae round as my loove comes todlen hame.

Leeze me on liquor, my todlen dow,
Ye're ay sae good humour'd when weeting your mou;
When sober sae sour, ye'll fight wi' a flee,
That 'tis a blyth sight to the bairns and me,
When todlen hame, todlen hame,
When round as a neep ye come todlen hame.

CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN.

This song is by the Duke of Gordon.—The old verses are,

There's cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And castocks in Strabogie;
When ilka lad maun hae his lass,
Then fye, gie me my cogie.
My cogie, Sirs, my cogie, Sirs,
I cannot want my cogie:
I wadna gie my three-girr'd stoup
For a' the quenes on Bogie.

There's Johnie Smith has got a wife
That scrimps him o' his cogie,
If she were mine, upon my life
I'd douk her in a bogie.
My cogie, Sirs, &c.—Burns.

CAULD KAIL IN ABERDEEN.

There's cauld kail in Aberdeen,
And castocks in Stra'bogie;
Gin I but hae a bonny lass,
Ye're welcome to your cogie:
And ye may sit up a' the night,
And drink till it be braid day-light;
Gie me a lass baith clean and tight,
To dance the Reel of Bogie.

In cotillons the French excel;
John Bull loves countra-dances;
The Spaniards dance fandangos well;
Mynheer an allemande prances:
In foursome reels the Scotch delight,
The threesome maist dance wond'rous light;
But twasome's ding a' out o' sight,
Danc'd to the Reel of Bogie.

Come, lads, and view your partners well,
Wale each a blythsome rogie;
I'll tak this lassie to mysel,
She seems sae keen and vogie!
Now piper lad bang up the spring;
The countra fashion is the thing,
To prie their mou's e'er we begin
To dance the Reel of Bogie.

Now ilka lad has got a lass,
Save yon auld doited fogie;
And ta'en a fling upo' the grass,
As they do in Stra'bogie:
But a' the lasses look sae fain,
We canna think oursel's to hain,
For they maun hae their come again
To dance the Reel of Bogie.

Now a' the lads hae done their best,
Like true men of Stra'bogie;
We'll stop awhile and tak a rest,
And tipple out a cogie:
Come now, my lads, and tak your glass,
And try ilk other to surpass,
In wishing health to every lass
To dance the Reel of Bogie.

WE RAN AND THEY RAN.

The author of *We ran and they ran,* and *they ran and we ran, &c.* was the late Rev Murdoch M'Lennan, minister at Crathie, Deeside.—Burns.

There's some say that we wan,
Some say that they wan,
Some say that nane wan at a', man;
But one thing I'm sure,
That at Sheriff Muir *
A battle there was, which I saw, man:
And we ran, and they ran, and they ran, and we ran, and we ran, and they ran awa', man.

Brave Argyle † and Belhaven, ‡
Not like frighted Leven, §
Which Rothes ‖ and Haddington ¶ sa', man;
For they all with Wightman **
Advanced on the right, man,
While others took flight, being ra', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Lord Roxburgh †† was there,
In order to share
With Douglas, ‡‡ who stood not in awe, man,
Volunteerly to ramble
With lord Loudon Campbell, ‖‖
Brave Ilay §§ did suffer for a', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Sir John Schaw, ¶¶ that great knight,
Wi' broad-sword most bright,
On horseback he briskly did charge, man;
An hero that's bold,
None could him with-hold,
He stoutly encounter'd the targemen.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

For the cowardly Whittam, ***
For fear they should cut him,
Seeing glittering broad-swords wi' a pa', man,
And that in such thrang,
Made Baird edicang, †††
And from the brave clans ran awa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Brave Mar * and Panmure †
Were firm I am sure,
The latter was kidnapt awa', man,
With brisk men about,
Brave Harry ‡ retook
His brother, and laught at them a', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Grave Marshall ‖ and Lithgow, §
And Glengary's ¶ pith too,
Assisted by brave Loggie-a-man, **
And Gordons the bright
So boldly did fight,
The redcoats took flight and awa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Strathmore †† and Clanronald ‡‡
Cry'd still, advance, Donald!
Till both these heroes did fa', man; ‖‖
For there was such hashing,
And broad-swords a clashing,
Brave Forfar §§ himself got a cla', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

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* The battle of Dumblain or Sheriff-muir was fought the 13th of November 1715, between the Earl of Mar, for the Chevalier, and the Duke of Argyle for the government. Both sides claimed the victory, the left wing of either army being routed. The capture of Preston, it is very remarkable, happened on the same day.

† John (Campbell) 2d Duke of Argyle, commander-in-chief of the government forces; a nobleman of great talents and integrity, much respected by all parties: died 1743.

‡ John (Hamilton) Lord Belhaven; served as a volunteer; and had the command of a troop of horse raised by the county of Haddington: perished at sea, 1721.

§ David (Lesly) Earl of Leven; for the government.

‖ John (Lesly) Earl of Rothes; for the government.

¶ Thomas (Hamilton) Earl of Haddington; for the government.

** Major-General Joseph Wightman.

†† John (Ker) first Duke of Roxburgh; for the government.

‡‡ Archibald (Douglas) Duke of Douglas.

‖‖ Hugh (Campbell) Earl of Loudon.

§§ Archibald Earl of Ilay, brother to the Duke of Argyle. He was dangerously wounded.

¶¶ An officer in the troop of gentleman volunteers.

*** Major-general Thomas Whitham.

††† i. e. *Aid du camp.*

* John (Erskine) Earl of Mar, commander-in-chief of the Chevalier's army; a nobleman of great spirit, honour, and abilities. He died at Aix-la-Chapelle in 1732.

† James (Maule) Earl of Panmure; died at Paris, 1723.

‡ Honourable Harry Maule, brother to the Earl. The circumstance here alluded to is thus related in the Earl of Mar's printed account of the engagement:—"The prisoners taken by us were very civilly used, and none of them stript. Some were allow'd to return to Stirling upon their parole, &c. . . The few prisoners taken by the enemy on our left were most of them stript and wounded after taken. The Earl of Panmure being first of the prisoners wounded after taken. They having refused his parole, he was left in a village, and by the hasty retreat of the enemy, upon the approach of our army, was rescu'd by his brother and his servants."

‖ George (Keith) Earl Marischall, then a youth at college. He died at his government of Neufchatel in 1771. His brother, the celebrated Marshall Keith, was with him in this battle.

§ James (Livingston) Earl of Calendar and Linlithgow: attainted.

¶ Alexander M'Donald of Glengary, laird of a clan; a brave and spirited chief: attainted.

** Thomas Drummond of Logie-Almond; commanded the two battalions of Drummonds. He was wounded.

†† John (Lyon) Earl of Strathmore; "a man of good parts, of a most amiable disposition and character."

‡‡ Ranald M'Donald, Captain of Clan Ranald. *N. B.* The Captain of a clan was one who, being next or near in blood to the Chief, headed them in his infancy or absence.

‖‖ "We have lost to our regret, the Earl of Strathmore and the Captain of Clan Ranald." Earl of Mar's Letter to the Governor of Perth. Again, printed account:—"We cann't find above 60 of our men in all kill'd, among whom were the Earl of Strathmore [and] the Captain of Clan Ranald, both much lamented." The latter, "for his good parts and gentle accomplishments, was look'd upon as the most gallant and generous young gentleman among the clans. . . . He was lamented by both parties that knew him."

His servant, who lay on the field watching his dead body, being asked next day who that was, answered, He was a man yesterday.—*Boswell's Journey to the Hebrides*, p. 359.

§§ Archibald (Douglas) Earl of Forfar, who commanded a regiment in the Duke's army. He is said to have been shot in the knee, and to have had ten or twelve cuts in his head from the broad-swords. He died a few days after of his wounds.

Lord Perth * stood the storm,
Seaforth † but lukewarm,
Kilsyth ‡ and Strathallan ‖ not sla', man;
And Hamilton § pled
The men were not bred,
For he had no fancy to fa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Brave generous Southesk, ¶
Tilebairn ** was brisk,
Whose father indeed would not dra', man,
Into the same yoke,
Which serv'd for a cloak,
To keep the estate 'twixt them twa, man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Lord Rollo †† not fear'd,
Kintore ‡‡ and his beard,
Pitsligo ‖‖ and Ogilvie §§ a', man,
And brothers Balfours, ¶¶
They stood the first show'rs,
Clackmannan and Burleigh *** did cla', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

But Cleppan ††† acted pretty,
And Strowan the witty, ‡‡‡
A poet that pleases us a', man;
For mine is but rhime,
In respect of what's fine,
Or what he is able to dra', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

For Huntley * and Sinclair, †
They both play'd the tinclair,
With consciences black like a cra', man.
Some Angus and Fifemen
They ran for their life, man,
And ne'er a Lot's wife there at a', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Then Laurie the traytor,
Who betray'd his master,
His king and his country and a', man,
Pretending Mar might
Give order to fight,
To the right of the army awa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Then Laurie, for fear
Of what he might hear,
Took Drummond's best horse and awa', man,
Instead o' going to Perth,
He crossed the Firth,
Alongst Stirling-bridge and awa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

To London he press'd,
And there he address'd,
That he behav'd best o' them a', man;
And there without strife
Got settled for life,
An hundred a year to his fa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

In Burrowstounness
He resides wi' disgrace,
Till his neck stand in need of a dra', man,
And then in a tether
He'll swing frae a ladder,
[And] go aff the stage with a pa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

Rob Roy stood watch
On a hill for to catch
The booty for ought that I sa', man,
For he ne'er advanc'd
From the place he was stanc'd,
Till nae mair to do there at a', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

So we a' took the flight,
And Moubray the wright;
But Letham the smith was a bra' man,
For he took the gout,
Which truly was wit,
By judging it time to withdra', man.
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

And trumpet M'Lean,
Whose breeks were not clean,

---

* James Marquis of Drummond, son of James (Drummond) Duke of Perth, was lieutenant-general of horse, and "behaved with great gallantry." He was attainted, but escaped to France, where he soon after died.

† William (Mackenzie) Earl of Seaforth. He was attainted, and died in 1740.

‡ William (Livingston) Viscount Kilsyth: attainted.

‖ William (Drummond) Viscount Strathallan; whose sense of loyalty could scarcely equal the spirit and activity he manifested in the cause. He was taken prisoner in this battle, which he survived to perish in the still more fatal one of Culloden-muir.

§ Lieutenant-general George Hamilton, commanding under the Earl of Mar.

¶ James (Carnegie) Earl of Southesk; was attainted, and, escaping to France, died there in 1729.

** William (Murray) Marquis of Tullibardin, eldest son to the Duke of Athole. Having been attainted, he was taken at sea in 1746, and died soon after, of a flux, in the Tower.

†† Robert (Rollo) Lord Rollo; "a man of singular merit and great integrity:" died in 1758.

‡‡ William (Keith) Earl of Kintore.

‖‖ Alexander (Forbes) Lord Pitsligo; "a man of good parts, great honour and spirit, and universally beloved and esteemed." He was engaged again in the affair of 1745, for which he was attainted, and died at an advanced age in 1762.

§§ James Lord Ogilvie, eldest son of David (Ogilvie) Earl of Airly. He was attainted, but afterwards pardoned. His father, *not dra'ing into the same yoke*, saved the estate.

¶¶ Some relations it is supposed of the Lord Burleigh.

*** Robert (Balfour) Lord Burleigh. He was attainted, and died in 1757.

††† Major William Clephane, adjutant-general to the Marquis of Drummond.

‡‡‡ Alexander Robertson of Struan; who, having experienced every vicissitude of life, with a stoical firmness, died in peace 1749. He was an excellent poet, and has left elegies worthy of Tibullus.

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* Alexander (Gordon) Marquis of Huntley, eldest son to the Duke of Gordon, who, according to the usual policy of his country, (of which we here meet with several other instances), remained neutral.

† John Sinclair, Esq. commonly called Master of Sinclair, eldest son of Henry Lord Sinclair; was attainted, but afterwards pardoned, and died in 1750. The estate was preserved of course.

Thro' misfortune he happen'd to fa', man,
By saving his neck
His trumpet did break,
Came aff without musick at a', man.*
And we ran, and they ran, &c.

So there such a race was,
As ne'er in that place was,
And as little chase was at a', man;
Frae ither they 'run'
Without touk o' drum;
They did not make use of a pa', man.
And we ran, and they ran, and they ran, and we ran, and we ran, and they ran awa', man.

BIDE YE YET.

THERE is a beautiful song to this tune, beginning,

Alas, my son, you little know—

which is the composition of a Miss Jenny Graham of Dumfries.—BURNS.

ALAS! my son, you little know
The sorrows that from wedlock flow:
Farewell to every day of ease,
When you have gotten a wife to please.
Sae bide you yet, and bide you yet,
Ye little ken what's to betide you yet;
The half of that will gane you yet,
If a wayward wife obtain you yet.

Your experience is but small,
As yet you've met with little thrall;
The black cow on your foot ne'er trod,
Which gars you sing alang the road.
Sae bide you yet, &c.

Sometimes the rock, sometimes the reel,
Or some piece of the spinning-wheel,
She will drive at you wi' good will,
And then she'll send you to the de'il.
Sae bide you yet, &c.

When I like you was young and free,
I valued not the proudest she;
Like you I vainly boasted then,
That men alone were born to reign.
Sae bide you yet, &c.

Great Hercules and Sampson too,
Were stronger men than I or you;
Yet they were baffled by their dears,
And felt the distaff and the sheers.
Sae bide you yet, &c.

Stout gates of brass, and well-built walls,
Are proof 'gainst swords and cannon-balls;
But nought is found by sea or land,
That can a wayward wife withstand.
Sae bide you yet, &c.

BIDE YE YET.

OLD SET.

GIN I had a wee house and a canty wee fire,
A bonny wee wifie to praise and admire,
A bonny wee yardie aside a wee burn;
Fareweel to the bodies that yammer and mourn.
Sae bide ye yet, and bide ye yet,
Ye little ken what may betide ye yet,
Some bonny wee body may be my lot,
And I'll be canty wi' thinking o't.

When I gang afield, and come home at e'en,
I'll get my wee wifie fou neat and fou clean;
And a bonny wee bairne upon her knee,
That will cry, papa, or daddy, to me.
Sae bide ye yet, &c.

And if there happen ever to be
A diff'rence atween my wee wifie and me,
In hearty good humour, although she be teaz'd,
I'll kiss her and clap her until she be pleas'd.
Sae bide ye yet, &c.

THE ROCK AND THE WEE PICKLE TOW.

BY ALEXANDER ROSS.

THERE was an auld wife an' a wee pickle tow,
An' she wad gae try the spinning o't,
She louted her down, an' her rock took a low,
And that was a bad beginning o't:
She sat an' she grat, an' she flet and she flang,
An' she threw an' she blew, an' she wrigl'd an' wrang,
An' she choked, an' boaked, an' cry'd like to mang,
Alas! for the dreary spinning o't.

I've wanted a sark for these eight years an' ten,
An' this was to be the beginning o't,

---

* The particulars of this anecdote no where appear. The hero is supposed to be the same *John M'Lean, trumpet*, who was sent from Lord Mar, then at Perth, with a letter to the Duke of Argyle, at Stirling camp, on the 30th of October. *Vide Original Letters* 1730. Two copies, however, printed not long after 1715, read, "And trumpet *Marine*."

In 1782 the son of this *Trumpeter Marine* told the Earl of Haddington (then Lord Binning) that the first circuit he ever attended, as one of his Majesty's household trumpeters, was the Northern, in the year 1716, along with old Lord Minto. That the reason of his going there was, that the circuit immediately preceding, his father had been so harassed in every town he went through, by the people singing his verse, "*And trumpet Marine, whose breeks,*" &c. of this song, that he swore he would never go again; and actually resigned his situation in favour of his son.—*Campbell's History of Poetry in Scotland.*

But I vow I shall want it for as lang again,
Or ever I try the spinning o't;
For never since ever they ca'd me as they ca' me,
Did sic a mishap an' misanter befa' me,
But ye shall hae leave baith to hang me an' draw me,
The neist time I try the spinning o't.

I hae keeped my house for these three score o' years,
An' ay I kept free o' the spinning o't,
But how I was sarked foul fa' them that speers,
For it minds me upo' the beginning o't.
But our women are now a days grown sae bra',
That ilka an maun hae a sark an' some hae twa,
The warlds were better when ne'er an awa'
Had a rag but ane at the beginning o't.

Foul fa' her that ever advis'd me to spin,
That had been so lang a beginning o't,
I might well have ended as I did begin,
Nor have got sick a skair with the spinning o't.
But they'll say, she's a wyse wife that kens her ain weerd,
I thought on a day, it should never be speer'd,
How loot ye the low take your rock be the beard,
When ye yeed to try the spinning o't?

The spinning, the spinning it gars my heart sob,
When I think upo' the beginning o't,
I thought ere I died to have anes made a web,
But still I had weers o' the spinning o't.
But had I nine dathers, as I hae but three,
The safest and soundest advice I cud gee,
Is that they frae spinning wad keep their hands free,
For fear of a bad beginning o't.

Yet in spite of my counsel if they will needs run
The drearysome risk of the spinning o't,
Let them seek out a lythe in the heat of the sun,
And there venture o' the beginning o't:
But to do as I did, alas, and awow!
To busk up a rock at the cheek of the low,
Says, that I had but little wit in my pow,
And as little ado with the spinning o't.

But yet after a', there is ae thing that grieves
My heart to think o' the beginning o't,
Had I won the length but of ae pair o' sleeves,
Then there had been word o' the spinning o't;
This I wad ha' washen an' bleech'd like the snaw,
And o' my twa gardies like moggans wad draw,
An' then fouk wad say, that auld Girzy was bra',
An' a' was upon her ain spinning o't.

But gin I wad shog about till a new spring,
I should yet hae a bout of the spinning o't,
A mutchkin of linseed I'd i' the yerd fling,
For a' the wan chansie beginning o't.
I'll gar my ain Tammie gae down to the how,
An' cut me a rock of a widdershines grow,
Of good ranty-tree for to carry my tow,
An' a spindle of the same for the twining o't.

For now when I mind me, I met Maggy Grim,
This morning just at the beginning o't,
She was never ca'd chancy, but canny an' slim,
An' sae it has fair'd of my spinning o't:
But an' my new rock were anes cutted an' dry,
I'll a' Maggies can an' her cantraps defy,
An' but onie sussie the spinning I'll try,
An' ye's a' hear o' the beginning o't.

Quo' Tibby, her dather, tak tent fat ye say,
The never a ragg we'll be seeking o't,
Gin ye anes begin, ye'll tarveal's night an' day,
Sae it's vain ony mair to be speaking o't.
Since lambas I'm now gaing thirty an' twa,
An' never a dud sark had I yet gryt or sma',
An' what war am I? I'm as warm an' as bra',
As thrummy tail'd Meg that's a spinner o't.

To labor the lint-land, an' then buy the seed,
An' then to yoke me to the harrowing o't,
An' syn loll amon't an' pike out ilka weed,
Like swine in a sty at the farrowing o't;
Syn powing and ripling an' steeping, an' then
To gar's gae an' spread it upo' the cauld plain,
An' then after a' may be labor in vain,
When the wind and the weet gets the fusion o't.

But tho' it should anter the weather to byde,
Wi' beetles we're set to the drubbing o't,
An' then frae our fingers to gnidge aff the hide,
With the wearisome wark o' the rubbing o't.
An' syn ilka tait maun be heckl'd out throw,
The lint putten ae gate, anither the tow,
Syn on a rock wi't, an' it taks a low,
The back o' my hand to the spinning o't.

Quo' Jenny, I think 'oman ye're i' the right,
Set your feet ay a spar to the spinning o't,
We may tak our advice frae our ain mither's fright
That she gat when she try'd the beginning o't.
But they'll say that auld fouk are twice bairns indeed,
An' sae she has kythed it, but there's nae need
To sickan an amshack that we drive our head,
As langs we're sae skair'd fra the spinning o't.

Quo' Nanny the youngest, I've now heard you a',
An' dowie's your doom o' the spinning o't,
Gin ye, fan the cows flings, the cog cast awa',
Ye may see where ye'll lick up your winning o't.
But I see that but spinning I'll never be bra',
But gae by the name of a dilp or a da,
Sae lack where ye like I shall anes shak a fa',
Afore I be dung with the spinning o't.

For well I can mind me when black Willie Bell
Had Tibbie there just at the winning o't,
What blew up the bargain, she kens well hersell,
Was the want of the knack of the spinning o't.

An' now, poor 'oman, for ought that I ken,
She may never get sic an offer again,
But pine away bit an' bit, like Jenkin's hen,
An' naething to wyte but the spinning o't.

But were it for naething, but just this alane,
I shall yet hae about o' the spinning o't,
They may cast me for ca'ing me black at the bean,
But nae cause I shun'd the beginning o't.
But, be that as it happens, I care not a strae,
But nane of the lads shall hae it to say,
When they come till woo, she kens naething avae,
Nor has onie ken o' the spinning o't.

In the days they ca'd yore, gin auld fouks had but won,
To a surkoat hough side for the winning o't,
Of coat raips well cut by the cast o' their bun,
They never sought mair o' the spinning o't.
A pair of grey hoggers well clinked benew,
Of nae other lit but the hue of the ew,
With a pair of rough rullions to scuff thro' the dew,
Was the fee they sought at the beginning o't.

But we maun hae linen, an' that maun hae we,
An' how get we that, but the spinning o't?
How can we hae face for to seek a gryt fee,
Except we can help at the winning o't?
An' we maun hae pearlins and mabbies an' cocks,
An' some other thing that the ladies ca' smoks,
An' how get we that, gin we tak na our rocks,
And pow what we can at the spinning o't?

'Tis needless for us for to tak our remarks
Frae our mither's miscooking the spinning o't,
She never kend ought o' the gueed of the sarks,
Frae this aback to the beginning o't.
Twa three ell of plaiden was a' that was sought
By our auld warld bodies, an' that boot be bought,
For in ilka town sickan things was nae wrought,
So little they kend o' the spinning o't.

HOOLY AND FAIRLY.

It is remark-worthy that the song of *Hooly and Fairly*, in all the old editions of it, is called *The Drunken Wife o' Galloway*, which localizes it to that country.—Burns.

THE DRUNKEN WIFE O' GALLOWAY.

Oh! what had I to do for to marry?
My wife she drinks naething but sack and Canary,
I to her friends complain'd right early,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly,
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly.

First she drank crummie, and syne she drank garie;
Now she has druken my bonny grey marie,
That carried me thro' a' the dubs and the larie
O! gin, &c.

She has druken her stockins, sa has she her shoon,
And she has druken her bonny new gown;
Her wee bit dud sark that co'erd her fu' rarely,
O! gin, &c.

If she'd drink but her ain things I wad na much care,
But she drinks my claiths I canna weel spare,
When I'm wi' my gossips, it angers me sairly,
O! gin, &c.

My Sunday's coat she's laid it a wad,
The best blue bonnet e'er was on my head;
At kirk and at market I'm cover'd but barely,
O! gin, &c.

The verra gray mittens that gaed on my han's,
To her neebor wife she has laid them in pawns;
My bane-headed staff that I lo'ed sae dearly,
O! gin, &c.

If there's ony siller, she maun keep the purse;
If I seek but a baubee she'll scauld and she'll curse,
She gangs like a queen—I scrimped and sparely,
O! gin, &c.

I never was given to wrangling nor strife,
Nor e'er did refuse her the comforts of life;
Ere it come to a war I'm ay for a parley.
O! gin, &c.

A pint wi' her cummers I wad her allow,
But when she sits down she fills herself fou;
And when she is fou she's unco camstarie,
O! gin, &c.

When she comes to the street she roars and she rants,
Has nae fear o' her neebors, nor minds the house wants;
She rants up some fool-sang, like "*Up y'er heart, Charlie.*"
O! gin, &c.

And when she comes hame she lays on the lads,
She ca's the lasses baith limmers and jads,
And I, my ain sell, an auld cuckold carlie,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly,
Hooly and fairly, hooly and fairly,
O! gin my wife wad drink hooly and fairly.

THE OLD MAN'S SONG.

BY THE REV. J. SKINNER.

Tune—"Dumbarton Drums."

O! WHY should old age so much wound us!*
There is nothing in it all to confound us:
For how happy now am I,
With my old wife sitting by,
And our bairns and our oys † all around us;
For how happy now am I, &c.

We began in the warld wi' naething,
And we've jogg'd on, and toil'd for the ae thing;
We made use of what we had,
And our thankful hearts were glad;
When we got the bit meat and the claithing,
We made use of what we had, &c.

We have liv'd all our life-time contented,
Since the day we became first acquainted:
It's true we've been but poor,
And we are so to this hour;
But we never yet repin'd or lamented.
It's true we've been but poor, &c.

When we had any stock, we ne'er vauntit,
Nor did we hing our heads when we wantit;
But we always gave a share
Of the little we cou'd spare,
When it pleas'd a kind Heaven to grant it.
But we always gave a share, &c.

We never laid a scheme to be wealthy,
By means that were cunning or stealthy;
But we always had the bliss,
(And what further could we wiss),
To be pleas'd with ourselves, and be healthy.
But we always had the bliss, &c.

What tho' we cannot boast of our guineas,
We have plenty of Jockies and Jeanies;
And these, I'm certain, are
More desirable by far
Than a bag full of poor yellow sleenies.
And these, I'm certain, are, &c.

We have seen many wonder and ferly,
Of changes that almost are yearly,
Among rich folks up and down,
Both in country and in town,
Who now live but scrimply and barely,
Among rich folks up and down, &c.

Then why should people brag of prosperity?
A straiten'd life we see is no rarity;
Indeed we've been in want,
And our living's been but scant,
Yet we never were reduced to need charity.
Indeed we've been in want, &c.

In this house we first came together,
Where we've long been a father and mither;
And tho' not of stone and lime,
It will last us all our time;
And, I hope, we shall ne'er need anither.
And tho' not of stone and lime, &c.

And when we leave this poor habitation,
We'll depart with a good commendation;
We'll go hand in hand, I wiss,
To a better house than this,
To make room for the next generation.
Then why should old age so much wound us,
There is nothing in it all to confound us:
For how happy now am I,
With my old wife sitting by,
And our bairns and our oys all around us.

TAK YOUR AULD CLOAK ABOUT YE.

A PART of this old song, according to the English *set* of it, is quoted in Shakspeare.*—BURNS.

IN winter when the rain rain'd cauld,
And frost and snaw on ilka hill,
And Boreas, with his blasts sae bauld,
Was threat'ning a' our ky to kill:
Then Bell my wife, wha loves na strife,
She said to me right hastily,
Get up, goodman, save Cromy's life,
And tak your auld cloak about ye.

My Cromie is an useful cow,
And she is come of a good kyne;
Aft has she wet the bairns' mou,
And I am laith that she shou'd tyne.
Get up, goodman, it is fou time,
The sun shines in the lift sae hie;
Sloth never made a gracious end,
Go tak your auld cloak about ye.

My cloak was anes a good grey cloak,
When it was fitting for my wear;
But now it's scantly worth a groat,
For I have worn't this thirty year;
Let's spend the gear that we have won,
We little ken the day we'll die:
Then I'll be proud, since I have sworn
To have a new cloak about me.

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* This tune requires O to be added at the end of each of the long lines, but in reading the song the O is better omitted.

† *Oys*—Grand-children.

* In the drinking scene in Othello: Iago sings,—

King Stephen was a worthy peer,
His breeches cost him but a crown;
He held them sixpence all too dear,
With that he called the tailor lown.
He was a wight of high renown,
And thou art but of low degree:
'Tis pride that pulls the country down,
Then take thine auld cloak about thee.

The old song from which these stanzas were taken was recovered by Dr. Percy, and preserved by him in his *Reliques of Ancient Poetry.*

In days when our king Robert rang,
His trews they cost but haff a crown;
He said they were a groat o'er dear,
And call'd the taylor thief and loun.
He was the king that wore a crown,
And thou the man of laigh degree,
'Tis pride puts a' the country down,
Sae tak thy auld cloak about thee.

Every land has its ain laugh,
Ilk kind of corn it has its hool,
I think the warld is a' run wrang,
When ilka wife her man wad rule;
Do ye not see Rob, Jock, and Hab,
As they are girded gallantly,
While I sit hurklen in the ase;
I'll have a new cloak about me.

Goodman, I wate 'tis thirty years,
Since we did ane anither ken;
And we have had between us twa,
Of lads and bonny lasses ten:
Now they are women grown and men,
I wish and pray well may they be;
And if you prove a good husband,
E'en tak your auld cloak about ye.

Bell my wife, she loves na strife;
But she wad guide me, if she can,
And to maintain an easy life,
I aft maun yield, tho' I'm goodman.
Nought's to be won at woman's hand,
Unless ye give her a' the plea;
Then I'll leave aff where I began,
And tak my auld cloak about me.

JOHNY FAA, OR THE GYPSIE LADDIE.

The people in Ayrshire begin this song—

The gypsies cam to my Lord Cassilis' yett.

They have a great many more stanzas in this song than I ever yet saw in any printed copy. The castle is still remaining at Maybole, where his lordship shut up his wayward spouse, and kept her for life.—Burns.

The gypsies came to our good lord's gate,
And wow but they sang sweetly;
They sang sae sweet, and sae very complete,
That down came the fair ladie.

And she came tripping down the stair,
And a' her maids before her;
As soon as they saw her weelfar'd face,
They coost the glamer o'er her.

"Gar tak fra me this gay mantile,
And bring to me a plaidie;
For if kith and kin and a' had sworn,
I'll follow the gypsie laddie.

"Yestreen I lay in a well-made bed,
And my good lord beside me;
This night I'll ly in a tenant's barn,
Whatever shall betide me."

Come to your bed, says Johny Faa,
Oh! come to your bed, my deary;
For I vow and swear by the hilt of my sword,
That your lord shall nae mair come near ye.

"I'll go to bed to my Johny Faa,
And I'll go to bed to my deary;
For I vow and swear by what past yestreen,
That my lord shall nae mair come near me.

"I'll mak a hap to my Johny Faa,
And I'll mak a hap to my deary;
And he's get a' the coat gaes round,
And my lord shall nae mair come near me.

And when our lord came home at e'en,
And speir'd for his fair lady,
The tane she cry'd, and the other reply'd,
She's away wi' the gypsie laddie.

"Gae saddle to me the black, black steed,
Gae saddle and mak him ready;
Before that I either eat or sleep,
I'll gae seek my fair lady."

And we were fifteen well-made men,
Altho' we were nae bonny;
And we were a' put down for ane,
A fair young wanton lady.

TO DAUNTON ME.

The two following old stanzas to this tune have some merit:—Burns.

To daunton me, to daunton me,
O ken ye what it is that'll daunton me?—
There's eighty eight and eighty nine,
And a' that I hae born sinsyne,
There's cess and press and Presbytrie,
I think it will do meikle for to daunton me.

But to wanton me, to wanton me,
O ken ye what it is that wad wanton me?—
To see gude corn upon the rigs,
And banishment amang the Whigs,
And right restored where right sud be,
I think it would do meikle for to wanton me.

TO DAUNTON ME.

There is an old set of the song: not political, but very independent. It runs thus:—

The blude red rose at Yule may blaw,
The simmer lilies blume in snaw,

The frost may freeze the deepest sea,
But an auld man shall never daunton me.
To daunton me, and me sae young,
Wi' his fause heart and flatterin' tongue,
That is the thing ye ne'er shall see,
For an auld man shall never daunton me.

For a' his meal, for a' his maut,
For a' his fresh beef, and his saut,
For a' his gowd and white monie,
An auld man shall never daunton me.
To daunton me, &c.

His gear may buy him kye and yowes,
His gear may buy him glens and knowes,
But me he shall not buy nor fee,
For an auld man shall never daunton me.
To daunton me, &c.

He hirples twa fau'd as he dow.
Wi' his teethless gab, and his bald pow,
And the rheum rins down frae his red blue e'e,
But an auld man shall never daunton me.

THE BONNIE LASS MADE THE BED TO ME.

"The Bonnie Lass made the Bed to me," was composed on an amour of Charles II. when skulking in the North, about Aberdeen, in the time of the usurpation. He formed *une petite affaire* with a daughter of the House of Portletham, who was the *lass that made the bed to him*:—two verses of it are,

I kiss'd her lips sae rosy red,
While the tear stood blinkin in her e'e;
I said my lassie dinna cry,
For ye ay shall mak the bed to me.

She took her mither's winding sheet,
And o't she made a sark to me;
Blythe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me.

Burns.

I HAD A HORSE AND I HAD NAE MAIR.

This story was founded on fact. A John Hunter, ancestor to a very respectable farming family who live in a place in the parish, I think, of Galston, called Barr-mill, was the luckless hero that *had a horse and had nae mair*.—For some little youthful follies he found it necessary to make a retreat to the West-Highlands, where *he feed himself to a Highland Laird*, for that is the expression of all the oral editions of the song I ever heard.—The present Mr. Hunter, who told me the anecdote, is the great-grandchild to our hero.—Burns.

I had a horse, and I had nae mair,
I gat him frae my daddy;
My purse was light, and my heart was sair,
But my wit it was fu' ready.
And sae I thought me on a time,
Outwittens of my daddy,
To fee mysel to a lawland laird,
Wha had a bonnie lady.

I wrote a letter, and thus began,
"Madam, be not offended,
I'm o'er the lugs in love wi' you,
And care not tho' ye kend it:
For I get little frae the laird,
And far less frae my daddy,
And I would blythely be the man
Would strive to please my lady."

She read my letter, and she leugh,
"Ye needna been sae blate, man;
You might hae come to me yoursel,
And tauld me o' your state, man:
Ye might hae come to me yoursel,
Outwittens o' ony body,
And made *John Gowkston* of the laird,
And kiss'd his bonnie lady."

Then she pat siller in my purse,
We drank wine in a coggie;
She feed a man to rub my horse,
And wow! but I was vogie.
But I gat ne'er sa sair a fleg,
Since I came frae my daddy,
The laird came, rap rap, to the yett,
When I was wi' his lady.

Then she pat me below a chair,
And happ'd me wi' a plaidie;
But I was like to swarf wi' fear,
And wish'd me wi' my daddy.
The laird went out, he saw na me,
I went when I was ready:
I promis'd, but I ne'er gade back
To kiss his bonnie lady.

AULD ROBIN GRAY.

This air was formerly called *The Bridegroom greets when the sun gangs down*. The words are by Lady Ann Lindsay.—Burns.

When the sheep are in the fauld, and the ky at hame,
And a' the warld to sleep are gane;
The waes of my heart fa' in show'rs frae my ee,
When my gudeman lyes sound by me.

Young Jamie loo'd me weel, and he sought me for his bride,
But saving a crown he had naething beside;
To make that crown a pound, my Jamie gade to sea,
And the crown and the pound were baith for me.

He had nae been awa a week but only twa,
When my mother she fell sick, and the cow was stown awa ;
My father brak his arm, and my Jamie at the sea,
And auld Robin Gray came a courting me.

My father coudna work, and my mother coudna spin,
I toil'd day and night, but their bread I coudna win ;
Auld Rob maintain'd them baith, and wi' tears in his ee,
Said, " Jenny, *for their sakes*, O marry me."

My heart it said nay, I look'd for Jamie back,
But the wind it blew high, and the ship it was a wrack ;
The ship it was a wrack, why didna Jenny die,
And why do I live to say, waes me?

My father argued sair, tho' my mither didna speak,
She look'd in my face till my heart was like to break ;
So they gi'ed him my hand, tho' my heart was in the sea,
And auld Robin Gray is gudeman to me.

I hadna been a wife a week but only four,
When sitting sae mournfully at the door,
I saw my Jamie's wraith, for I coudna think it he,
'Till he said, " I'm come back for to marry thee."

O sair did we greet, and mickle did we say,
We took but ae kiss, and we tore ourselves away,
I wish I were dead ! but I'm no like to die,
And why do I live to say, waes me !

I gang like a ghaist, and I carena to spin,
I darna think on Jamie, for that wad be a sin ;
But I'll do my best a gudewife to be,
For auld Robin Gray is kind unto me.

UP AND WARN A' WILLIE.

The expression, " *Up and warn a' Willie*," alludes to the Crantara, or warning of a Highland Clan to arms. Not understanding this, the Lowlanders in the west and south say, " *Up and* waur *them a'*, &c. This edition of the song I got from Tom Niel,* of facetious fame, in Edinburgh.

Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
To hear my canty Highland sang,
Relate the thing I saw, Willie.—Burns.

When we gaed to the braes o' Mar,
And to the wapon-shaw, Willie,
Wi' true design to serve the king,
And banish whigs awa, Willie.
Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
For lords and lairds came there bedeen,
And wou but they were braw, Willie.

But when the standard was set up,
Right fierce the wind did blaw, Willie ;
The royal nit upon the tap
Down to the ground did fa', Willie.
Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
Then second-sighted Sandy said,
We'd do nae gude at a', Willie.

But when the army join'd at Perth,
The bravest e'er ye saw, Willie,
We didna doubt the rogues to rout,
Restore our king and a', Willie.
Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
The pipers play'd frae right to left,
O whirry whigs awa, Willie.

But when we march'd to Sherra-muir,
And there the rebels saw, Willie,
Brave Argyle attack'd our right,
Our flank and front and a', Willie.
Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
Traitor Huntly soon gave way,
Seaforth, St. Clair and a', Willie.

But brave Glengary on our right,
The rebels' left did claw, Willie ;
He there the greatest slaughter made
That ever Donald saw, Willie.
Up and warn a' Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
And Whittam s—t his breeks for fear,
And fast did rin awa, Willie.

For he ca'd us a Highland mob,
And soon he'd slay us a' Willie,
But we chas'd him back to Stirling brig,
Dragoons and foot and a', Willie.
Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
At length we rallied on a hill,
And briskly up did draw, Willie.

But when Argyle did view our line,
And them in order saw, Willie,
He streight gaed to Dumblane again,
And back his left did draw, Willie.
Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a' ;
Then we to Auchteraider march'd,
To wait a better fa', Willie.

Now if ye spear wha wan the day,
I've tell'd you what I saw, Willie,

* *Tom Niel* was a carpenter in Edinburgh, and lived chiefly by making coffins. He was also Precentor, or Clerk, in one of the churches. He had a good strong voice, and was greatly distinguished by his powers of mimicry, and his humorous manner of singing the old Scottish ballads.

We baith did fight and baith did beat,
And baith did rin awa, Willie.
Up and warn a', Willie,
Warn, warn a';
For second-sighted Sandie said,
We'd do nae gude at a', Willie.

THE BLYTHSOME BRIDAL.

I FIND the *Blythsome Bridal* in James Watson's Collection of Scots Poems, printed at Edinburgh in 1706.

This song has humour and a felicity of expression worthy of Ramsay, with even more than his wonted broadness and sprightly language. The Witty Catalogue of Names, with their Historical Epithets, are done in the true Lowland Scottish taste of an age ago, when every householder was nicknamed either from some prominent part of his character, person, or lands and housen, which he rented. Thus—"*Skape-fitted Rob.*" "*Thrawn-mou'd Rab o' the Dubs.*" "*Roarin Jock i' the Swair.*" "*Slaverin' Simmie o' Todshaw.*" "*Souple Kate o' Irongray,*" &c. &c.—BURNS.

Fy let us all to the bridal,
For there will be lilting there;
For Jockie's to be married to Maggie,
The lass wi' the gauden hair.
And there will be lang-kail and pottage,
And bannocks of barley-meal,
And there will be good sawt herring,
To relish a cog of good ale.
Fy let us all to the bridal,
For there will be lilting there,
For Jockie's to be marry'd to Maggie,
The lass with the gauden hair.

And there will be Sandie the sutor,
And 'Will' with the meikle mow;
And there will be Tam the 'bluter,'
With Andrew the tinkler, I trow.
And there will be bow-legged Robbie,
With thumbless Katie's goodman;
And there will be blue-cheeked Dowbie,
And Lawrie the laird of the land.
Fy let us all, &c.

And there will be sow-libber Patie,
And plouckie-fac'd Wat i' the mill,
Capper-nos'd Francie, and Gibbie,
That wons in the how of the hill;
And there will be Alaster Sibbie,
Wha in with black Bessy did mool,
With sneevling Lillie, and Tibbie,
The lass that stands aft on the stool.
Fy let us all, &c.

And Madge that was buckled to Steenie,
And coft him [grey] breeks to his arse,
'Wha after was' hangit for stealing,
Great mercy it happened na warse:
And there will be gleed Geordie Janners,
And Kirsh wi' the lily-white leg,
Wha 'gade' to the south for manners,
And bang'd up her wame in Mons Meg.
Fy let us all, &c.

And there will be Judan Maclawrie,
And blinkin daft Barbra 'Macleg,'
Wi' flae-lugged, sharny-fac'd Lawrie,
And shangy-mou'd halucket Meg.
And there will be happer-ars'd Nansy,
And fairy-fac'd Flowrie be name,
Muck Madie, and fat-hipped Lizie,
The lass with the gauden wame
Fy let us all, &c.

And there will be girn-again Gibbie,
With his glakit wife Jennie Bell,
And Misle-shinn'd Mungo Macapie,
The lad that was skipper himsel.
There lads and lasses in pearlings
Will feast in the heart of the ha',
On sybows, and ryfarts, and carlings,
That are baith sodden and raw.
Fy let us all, &c.

And there will be fadges and brachen,
With fouth of good gappoks of skate,
Pow-sodie, and drammock, and crowdie,
And callour nout-feet in a plate;
And there will be partans and buckies,
Speldens and whytens enew,
And singed sheep-heads, and a haggize,
And seadlips to sup till ye spew.
Fy let us all, &c.

And there will be lapper'd-milk kebbucks,
And sowens, and farles, and baps,
With swats, and well-scraped paunches,
And brandy in stoups and in caps;
And there will be meal-kail and castocks,
With skink to sup till ye rive;
And rosts to rost on a brander,
Of flouks that were taken alive.
Fy let us all, &c.

Scrapt haddocks, wilks, dilse, and tangles,
And a mill of good snishing to prie;
When weary with eating and drinking,
We'll rise up and dance till we die.
Then fy let us all to the bridal,
For there will be lilting there;
For Jockie's to be marry'd to Maggy,
The lass with the gauden hair.

O CAN YE LABOUR LEA, YOUNG MAN.

THIS song has long been known among the inhabitants of Nithsdale and Galloway, where it is a great favourite. The first verse should be restored to its original state.

I FEED a lad at Roodsmass,
Wi' siller pennies three;
When he came home at Martinmass,
He could nae labour lea.
O canna ye labour lea, young lad,
O canna ye labour lea?
Indeed, quo' he, my hand's out—
An' up his graith packed he.

This old way is the truest, for the terms, *Roodmass* is the hiring fair, and *Hallowmass* the *first* of the half year.—BURNS.

I FEED a man at Martinmass,
Wi' arle-pennies three;
But a' the faute I had to him,
He could nae labour lea.
O can ye labour lea, young man,
O can ye labour lea?
Gae back the gate ye came again,
Ye'se never scorn me.

O clappin's gude in Febarwar,
An' kissins sweet in May;
But what signifies a young man's love
An't dinna last for ay.
O can ye, &c.

O kissin is the key of luve,
An clappin is the lock,
An' makin-of's the best thing
That e'er a young thing got.
O can ye, &c.

IN THE GARB OF OLD GAUL.

THIS tune was the composition of General Reid, and called by him *The Highland, or 42d Regiment's March.* The words are by Sir Harry Erskine.—BURNS.

IN the garb of old Gaul, wi' the fire of old Rome,
From the heath-cover'd mountains of Scotia we come,
Where the Romans endeavour'd our country to gain,
But our ancestors fought, and they fought not in vain.
Such our love of liberty, our country, and our laws,
That like our ancestors of old, we stand by Freedom's cause;
We'll bravely fight like heroes bold, for honour and applause,
And defy the French, with all their art, to alter our laws.

No effeminate customs our sinews unbrace,
No luxurious tables enervate our race,
Our loud-sounding pipe bears the true martial strain,
So do we the old Scottish valour retain.
Such our love, &c.

We're tall as the oak on the mount of the vale,
As swift as the roe which the hound doth assail,
As the full-moon in autumn our shields do appear,
Minerva would dread to encounter our spear.
Such our love, &c.

As a storm in the ocean when Boreas blows,
So are we enrag'd when we rush on our foes;
We sons of the mountains, tremendous as rocks,
Dash the force of our foes with our thundering strokes.
Such our love, &c.

Quebec and Cape Breton, the pride of old France,
In their troops fondly boasted till we did advance;
But when our claymores they saw us produce,
Their courage did fail, and they sued for a truce.
Such our love, &c.

In our realm may the fury of faction long cease,
May our councils be wise, and our commerce increase;
And in Scotia's cold climate may each of us find,
That our friends still prove true, and our beauties prove kind.
Then we'll defend our liberty, our country, and our laws,
And teach our late posterity to fight in Freedom's cause,
That they like our ancestors bold, &c.

WOO'D AND MARRIED AND A'.

Woo'd and married and a',
Woo'd and married and a',
Was she not very weel aff,
Was woo'd and married and a'!

THE bride came out o' the byre,
And O as she dighted her cheeks,
"Sirs, I'm to be married the night,
And has nouther blanket nor sheets;
Has nouther blankets nor sheets,
Nor scarce a coverlet too;
The bride that has a' to borrow,
Has e'en right meikle ado."
Woo'd and married, &c.

Out spake the bride's father,
As he came in frae the pleugh,
"O had yere tongue, my daughter,
And yese get gear enough;
The stirk that stands i' the tether,
And our bra' basin'd yade,
Will carry ye hame yere corn;
What wad ye be at ye jade?"
Woo'd and married, &c.

Outspake the bride's mither,
"What deil needs a' this pride?

I had nae a plack in my pouch
That night I was a bride;
My gown was linsy-woolsy,
And ne'er a sark ava,
And ye hae ribbons and buskins
Mair than ane or twa."
Woo'd and married, &c.

"What's the matter?" quo' Willie,
"Tho' we be scant o' claiths,
We'll creep the nearer thegither,
And we'll smoor a' the fleas;
Simmer is coming on,
And we'll get teats o' woo;
And we'll get a lass o' our ain,
And she'll spin claiths anew."
Woo'd and married, &c.

Outspake the bride's brither,
As he came in wi' the kye,
"Puir Willie had ne'er hae ta'en ye,
Had he kent ye as weel as I;
For you're baith proud and saucy,
And no for a puir man's wife,
Gin I canna get a better,
I'se never take ane i' my life."
Woo'd and married, &c.

Outspake the bride's sister,
As she came in frae the byre,
"O gin I were but married,
It's a' that I desire;
But we puir folk maun live single,
And do the best we can;
I dinna care what I should want,
If I could but get a man."
Woo'd and married and a',
Woo'd and married and a',
Was she not very weel aff,
Was woo'd and married and a'.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

A SUCCESSFUL imitation of an old song is really attended with less difficulty than to convince a blockhead that one of these *jeu d'esprits* is a forgery. This fine ballad is even a more palpable imitation than *Hardiknute*. The *manners* indeed are old, but the language is of yesterday. Its author must very soon be discovered.—BURNS.

BY JANE ELLIOT.

I'VE heard a lilting
At the ewes milking,
Lasses a' lilting before the break o' day,
But now I hear moaning
On ilka green loaning,
Since our brave forresters are a' wed away.

At buchts in the morning
Nae blythe lads are scorning;
The lasses are lonely, dowie and wae:
Nae daffin, nae gabbing,
But sighing and sabbing,
Ilk ane lifts her leglin, and hies her away.

At e'en in the gloming
Nae swankies are roaming,
'Mang stacks with the lasses at bogle to play;
For ilk ane sits drearie,
Lamenting her dearie,
The flow'rs o' the forest wh' are a' wed away.

In har'st at the shearing
Nae blythe lads are jeering,
The Bansters are lyart, and runkled, and grey;
At fairs nor at preaching,
Nae wooing, nae fleeching,
Since our bra foresters are a' wed away.

O dule for the order!
Sent our lads to the border!
The English for anes, by guile wan the day:
The flow'rs of the forest
Wha aye shone the foremost,
The prime of the land lie cauld in the clay.

THE FLOWERS OF THE FOREST.

BY MRS. COCKBURN.

I'VE seen the smiling of fortune beguiling,
I've tasted her favours, and felt her decay;
Sweet is her blessing, and kind her caressing,
But soon it is fled—it is fled far away.

I've seen the forest adorned of the foremost,
With flowers of the fairest, both pleasant and gay:
Full sweet was their blooming, their scent the air perfuming,
But now they are wither'd, and a' wede awae.

I've seen the morning, with gold the hills adorning,
And the red storm roaring, before the parting day;
I've seen Tweed's silver streams, glittering in the sunny beams,
Turn drumly and dark, as they rolled on their way.

O fickle fortune! why this cruel sporting?
Why thus perplex us poor sons of a day?
Thy frowns cannot fear me, thy smiles cannot cheer me,
Since the flowers of the forest are a' wede awae.

TIBBIE DUNBAR.

Tune—"Johnny M'Gill."

THIS tune is said to be the composition of John M'Gill, fiddler, in Girvan. He called it after his own name.—BURNS.

O, WILT thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar;
O, wilt thou go wi' me, sweet Tibbie Dunbar;
Wilt thou ride on a horse, or be drawn in a car,
Or walk by my side, O sweet Tibbie Dunbar?

I carena thy daddie, his lands and his money,
I carena thy kin, sae high and sae lordly:
But say thou wilt hae me for better for waur,
And come in thy coatie, sweet Tibbie Dunbar!

THIS IS NO MINE AIN HOUSE.

THE first half stanza is old, the rest is Ramsay's. The old words are:—BURNS.

O THIS is no mine ain house,
My ain house, my ain house;
This is no mine ain house,
I ken by the biggin o't.

There's bread and cheese are my door-cheeks,
Are my door-cheeks, are my door-cheeks;
There's bread and cheese are my door-cheeks;
And pan-cakes the riggin o't.

This is no my ain wean,
My ain wean, my ain wean;
This is no my ain wean,
I ken by the greetie o't.

I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
Aff my head, aff my head;
I'll tak the curchie aff my head,
And row't about the feetie o't.

The tune is an old Highland air, called *Shuan truish willighan.*

THE GABERLUNZIE-MAN.

THE Gaberlunzie-Man is supposed to commemorate an intrigue of James the Fifth. Mr. Callander of Craigforth, published some years ago, an edition of *Christ's Kirk on the Green*, and the *Gaberlunzie-Man*, with notes critical and historical. James the Fifth is said to have been fond of Gosford, in Aberlady Parish, and that it was suspected by his cotemporaries, that in his frequent excursions to that part of the country he had other purposes in view besides golfing and archery. Three favourite ladies, Sandilands, Weir, and Oliphant, (one of them resided at Gosford, and the others in the neighbourhood), were occasionally visited by their royal and gallant admirer, which gave rise to the following satirical advice to his Majesty, from Sir David Lindsay, of the Mount, Lord Lyon.

Sow not your seed on *Sandylands*,
Spend not your strength in *Weir*,
And ride not on an *Elephant*,
For spoiling o' your gear.—BURNS.

THE pawky auld carle came o'er the lee,
Wi' many good e'ens and days to me,
Saying, Goodwife, for your courtesie,
Will ye lodge a silly poor man!
The night was cauld, the carle was wat,
And down ayont the ingle he sat;
My daughter's shoulders he 'gan to clap,
And cadgily ranted and sang.

O wow! quo' he, were I as free,
As first when I saw this country,
How blyth and merry wad I be!
And I wad never think lang.
He grew canty, and she grew fain;
But little did her auld minny ken
What thir slee twa togither were say'n,
When wooing they were sae thrang.

And O! quo' he, ann ye were as black
As e'er the crown of my dady's hat,
'Tis I wad lay thee by my back,
And awa' wi' me thou shou'd gang.
And O! quo' she, ann I were as white,
As e'er the snaw lay on the dike,
I'd clead me braw, and lady like,
And awa' with thee I'd gang.

Between the twa was made a plot;
They raise awee before the cock,
And wilily they shot the lock,
And fast to the bent are they gane.
Up the morn the auld wife raise,
And at her leisure put on her claise;
Syne to the servant's bed she gaes,
To speer for the silly poor man.

She gaed to the bed where the beggar lay,
The strae was cauld, he was away,
She clapt her hand, cry'd Waladay,
For some of our gear will be gane.
Some ran to coffers, and some to kists,
But nought was stown that cou'd be mist,
She danc'd her lane, cry'd, Praise be blest,
I have lodg'd a leal poor man.

Since nathing's awa', as we can learn,
The kirn's to kirn, and milk to earn,
Gae butt the house, lass, and waken my bairn,
And bid her come quickly ben.

The servant gade where the daughter lay,
The sheets was cauld, she was away,
And fast to her goodwife gan say,
She's aff with the Gaberlunzie-man.

O fy gar ride, and fy gar rin,
And haste ye find these traytors again;
For she's be burnt, and he's be slain,
The wearifu' Gaberlunzie-man.
Some rade upo' horse, some ran a fit,
The wife was wood, and out o' her wit:
She cou'd na gang, nor yet cou'd she sit,
But ay she curs'd and she ban'd.

Mean time far hind out o'er the lea,
Fu' snug in a glen, where nane cou'd see,
The twa, with kindly sport and glee,
Cut frae a new cheese a whang:
The priving was good, it pleas'd them baith,
To lo'e her for ay, he gae her his aith;
Quo' she, to leave thee I will be laith,
My winsome Gaberlunzie-man.

O kend my minny I were wi' you,
Illsardly wad she crook her mou,
Sic a poor man she'd never trow,
After the Gaberlunzie-man.
My dear, quo' he, ye're yet o'er young,
And ha' nae lear'd the beggar's tongue,
To follow me frae town to town,
And carry the Gaberlunzie on.

Wi' cauk and keel I'll win your bread,
And spindles and whorles for them wha need,
Whilk is a gentle trade indeed,
To carry the Gaberlunzie—O.
I'll bow my leg, and crook my knee,
And draw a black clout o'er my eye,
A cripple or blind they will ca' me,
While we shall be merry and sing.

JONNIE COUP.

This satirical song was composed to commemorate General Cope's defeat at Preston-Pans, in 1745, when he marched against the clans.

The air was the tune of an old song, of which I have heard some verses, but now only remember the title, which was,

Will ye go to the coals in the morning.
BURNS.

Coup sent a letter frae Dunbar,
Charlie, meet me an ye dare,
And I'll learn you the art of war,
If you'll meet wi' me in the morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, are ye waking yet?
Or are your drums a-beating yet?
If ye were waking I wou'd wait
To gang to the coals i' the morning.

When Charlie look'd the letter upon,
He drew his sword the scabbard from,
Come follow me, my merry merry men,
And we'll meet wi' Coup i' the morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, &c.

Now, Jonnie, be as good as your word,
Come let us try both fire and sword,
And dinna rin awa' like a frighted bird,
That's chas'd frae it's nest in the morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, &c.

When Jonnie Coup he heard of this,
He thought it wadna be amiss
To hae a horse in readiness,
To flie awa' i' the morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, &c.

Fy now Jonnie get up and rin,
The Highland bagpipes makes a din,
It's best to sleep in a hale skin,
For 'twill be a bluddie morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, &c.

When Jonnie Coup to Berwick came,
They spear'd at him, where's a' your men,
The deil confound me gin I ken,
For I left them a' i' the morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, &c.

Now, Jonnie, trouth ye was na blate,
To come wi' the news o' your ain defeat,
And leave your men in sic a strait,
So early in the morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, &c.

Ah! faith, co' Jonnie, I got a fleg,
With their claymores and philabegs,
If I face them again, deil break my legs,
So I wish you a good morning.
Hey Jonnie Coup, &c.

A WAUKRIFE MINNIE.

I picked up this old song and tune from a country girl in Nithsdale.—I never met with it elsewhere in Scotland.—BURNS.

Whare are you gaun, my bonnie lass,
Where are you gaun, my hinnie,
She answer'd me right saucilie,
An errand for my minnie.

O whare live ye, my bonnie lass,
O whare live ye, my hinnie,
By yon burn-side, gin ye maun ken,
In a wee house wi' my minnie.

But I foor up the glen at een,
To see my bonnie lassie;
And lang before the gray morn cam,
She was na hauf sae saucie.

O weary fa' the waukrife cock,
And the foumart lay his crawin !
He wauken'd the auld wife frae her sleep,
A wee blink or the dawin.

An angry wife I wat she raise,
And o'er the bed she brought her ;
And wi' a mickle hazle rung
She made her a weel pay'd dochter.

O fare thee weel, my bonnie lass !
O fare thee weel, my hinnie !
Thou art a gay and a bonnie lass,
But thou hast a waukrife minnie.*

TULLOCHGORUM.

This, first of songs, is the master-piece of my old friend Skinner. He was passing the day at the town of Ellon, I think it was, in a friend's house whose name was Montgomery.—Mrs. Montgomery observing, *en passant*, that the beautiful reel of *Tullochgorum* wanted words, she begged them of Mr. Skinner, who gratified her wishes, and the wishes of every lover of Scottish song, in this most excellent ballad.

These particulars I had from the author's son, Bishop Skinner, at Aberdeen.—Burns.

Come gie's a sang, Montgomery cry'd,
And lay your disputes all aside,
What signifies't for folks to chide
For what was done before them :
Let Whig and Tory all agree,
Whig and Tory, Whig and Tory,
Whig and Tory all agree,
To drop their Whig-mig-morum.
Let Whig and Tory all agree
To spend the night wi' mirth and glee,
And cheerful sing alang wi' me,
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.

O, Tullochgorum's my delight,
It gars us a' in ane unite,
And ony sumph that keeps up spite,
In conscience I abhor him :
For blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
Blythe and cheerie, blythe and cheerie,
Blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
And make a happy quorum,
For blythe and cheerie we'll be a',
As lang as we hae breath to draw,
And dance till we be like to fa'
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.

What needs there be sae great a fraise,
Wi' dringing dull Italian lays,
I wadna gie our ain Strathspeys
For half a hunder score o' them.
They're dowf and dowie at the best,
Dowf and dowie, dowf and dowie,
Dowf and dowie at the best,
Wi' a' their variorum ;
They're dowf and dowie at the best,
Their *allegros* and a' the rest,
They canna please a Scottish taste,
Compar'd wi' Tullochgorum.

Let warldly worms their minds oppress
Wi' fears o' want and double cess,
And sullen sots themsells distress
Wi' keeping up decorum :
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Sour and sulky, sour and sulky,
Sour and sulky shall we sit
Like old philosophorum !
Shall we sae sour and sulky sit,
Wi' neither sense, nor mirth, nor wit,
Nor ever try to shake a fit
To the Reel o' Tullochgorum ?

May choicest blessings ay attend
Each honest, open-hearted friend,
And calm and quiet be his end,
And a' that's good watch o'er him ;
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Peace and plenty, peace and plenty,
Peace and plenty be his lot,
And dainties a great store o' them ;
May peace and plenty be his lot,
Unstain'd by any vicious spot,
And may he never want a groat,
That's fond o' Tullochgorum !

But for the sullen frumpish fool,
That loves to be oppression's tool,
May envy gnaw his rotten soul,
And discontent devour him ;
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Dool and sorrow, dool and sorrow,
Dool and sorrow be his chance,
And nane say, wae's me for him !
May dool and sorrow be his chance,
Wi' a' the ills that come frae *France*,
Wha e'er he be that winna dance
The Reel o' Tullochgorum.

JOHN O' BADENYON.

This excellent song is also the composition of my worthy friend, old Skinner, at Linshart. —Burns.

When first I cam to be a man
Of twenty years or so,
I thought myself a handsome youth,
And fain the world would know ;

* The peasantry have a verse superior to some of those recovered by Burns, which is worthy of notice. —*Ed.*

" O though thy hair was gowden weft,
An' thy lips o' drapping hinnie,
Thou hast gotten the clog that winna cling
For a' you're waukrife minnie."

In best attire I stept abroad,
With spirits brisk and gay,
And here and there and every where
Was like a morn in May;
No care I had nor fear of want,
But rambled up and down,
And for a beau I might have past
In country or in town;
I still was pleas'd where'er I went,
And when I was alone,
I tun'd my pipe and pleas'd myself
Wi' John o' Badenyon.

Now in the days of youthful prime
A mistress I must find,
For *love*, I heard, gave one an air,
And ev'n improved the mind:
On Phillis fair above the rest
Kind fortune fixt my eyes,
Her piercing beauty struck my heart,
And she became my choice;
To Cupid now with hearty prayer
I offer'd many a vow;
And danc'd and sung, and sigh'd, and swore,
As other lovers do;
But, when at last I breath'd my flame,
I found her cold as stone;
I left the girl, and tun'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

When *love* had thus my heart beguil'd
With foolish hopes and vain;
To *friendship's* port I steer'd my course,
And laugh'd at lovers' pain;
A friend I got by lucky chance,
'Twas something like divine,
An honest friend's a precious gift,
And such a gift was mine;
And now whatever might betide,
A happy man was I,
In any strait I knew to whom
I freely might apply;
A strait soon came: my friend I try'd;
He heard, and spurn'd my moan;
I hy'd me home, and tun'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

Methought I should be wiser next,
And would a *patriot* turn,
Began to doat on Johnny Wilkes,
And cry up Parson Horne.*
Their manly spirit I admir'd,
And prais'd their noble zeal,
Who had with flaming tongue and pen
Maintain'd the public weal;
But e'er a month or two had past,
I found myself betray'd,
'Twas *self* and *party* after all,
For a' the stir they made;
At last I saw the factious knaves
Insult the very throne,
I curs'd them a', and tun'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

* This song was composed when Wilkes, Horne, &c. were making a noise about liberty.

What next to do I mus'd a while,
Still hoping to succeed,
I pitch'd on *books* for company,
And gravely try'd to read:
I bought and borrow'd every where,
And study'd night and day,
Nor miss'd what dean or doctor wrote
That happen'd in my way:
Philosophy I now esteem'd
The ornament of youth,
And carefully through many a page
I hunted after truth.
A thousand various schemes I try'd,
And yet was pleas'd with none,
I threw them by, and tun'd my pipe
To John o' Badenyon.

And now ye youngsters every where,
That wish to make a show,
Take heed in time, nor fondly hope
For happiness below;
What you may fancy pleasure here,
Is but an empty name,
And *girls*, and *friends*, and *books*, and so,
You'll find them all the same;
Then be advised and warning take
From such a man as me;
I'm neither Pope nor Cardinal,
Nor one of high degree;
You'll meet displeasure every where;
Then do as I have done,
E'en tune your pipe and please yourselves
With John o' Badenyon.

THE LAIRD OF COCKPEN.

Here is a verse of this lively old song that used to be sung after these printed ones.—Burns.

O, wha has lien wi' our Lord yestreen?
O, wha has lien wi' our Lord yestreen?
In his soft down bed, O, twa fowk were the sted,
An' whare lay the chamber maid, lassie, yestreen?

COCKPEN.

O, when she came ben she bobbed fu' law,
O, when she came ben she bobbed fu' law,
And when she came ben she kiss'd Cockpen,
And syne deny'd she did it at a'.

And was na Cockpen right saucie with a',
And was na Cockpen right saucie with a',
In leaving the daughter of a Lord,
And kissin a collier lassie, an' a'?

O never look down my lassie, at a',
O never look down my lassie, at a',
Thy lips are as sweet, and thy figure complete,
As the finest dame in castle or ha'.

Tho' thou has nae silk and holland sae sma',
Tho' thou has nae silk and holland sae sma',
Thy coat and thy sark are thy ain handy-wark,
And Lady Jean was never sae braw!

The following set of this song is now very common. It is ascribed to the authoress of the novel of "Marriage:"

THE LAIRD OF COCKPEN.

Tune—"The Laird of Cockpen."

The Laird o' Cockpen, he is proud an' he's great;
His mind is ta'en up wi' the things of the state:
He wanted a wife his braw house to keep;
But favour wi' wooin' was fashious to seek.

Down by the dyke-side a lady did dwell;
At his table-head he thought she'd look well;
M'Leish's ae daughter o' Claverse-ha' Lee,
A pennyless lass wi' a lang pedigree.

His wig was weel pouther'd, as guid as when new,
His waistcoat was white, his coat it was blue;
He put on a ring,—a sword,—and cock'd hat,—
And wha' could refuse the Laird wi' a' that?

He took the grey mare and rade cannalie;
And rapp'd at the yett o' Claverse-ha' Lee:
Gae tell Mistress Jean to come speedily ben:
She's wanted to speak wi' the Laird o' Cockpen.

Mistress Jean she was makin' the elder-flower wine:
"And what brings the Laird at sic a like time?"
She put aff her apron, and on her silk gown,
Her mutch wi' red ribbons, and gaed awa' down.

And when she cam' ben, he booed fu' low;
And what was his errand he soon let her know;
Amazed was the Laird, when the lady said Na',
And wi' a laigh curtsie she turned awa'.

Dumbfounder'd he was, but nae sigh did he gie;
He mounted his mare, and rade caunilie:
And aften he thought, as he gaed thro' the glen,
She's daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen.

And now that the Laird his exit had made,
Mistress Jean she reflected on what she had said:
Oh for ane I'll get better, it's waur I'll get ten,
I was daft to refuse the Laird o' Cockpen.

Neist time that the Laird and the lady were seen,
They were gaun arm in arm to the kirk on the green;
Now she sits in the Ha' like a weel-tappit hen;
But as yet there's nae chickens appeared at Cockpen.

CA' THE EWES TO THE KNOWES.

This beautiful song is in the true old Scotch taste, yet I do not know that either air or words were in print before.—Burns.

Ca' the ewes to the knowes,
Ca' them whare the heather grows,
Ca' them whare the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie.

As I gaed down the water-side,
There I met my shepherd lad,
He row'd me sweetly in his plaid,
An' he ca'd me his dearie.
Ca' the ewes, &c.

Will ye gang down the water-side,
And see the waves sae sweetly glide,
Beneath the hazels spreading wide,
The moon it shines fu' clearly.
Ca' the ewes, &c.

I was bred up at nae sic school,
My shepherd lad, to play the fool,
And a' the day to sit in dool,
And naebody to see me.
Ca' the ewes, &c.

Ye sall get gowns and ribbons meet,
Cauf-leather shoon upon your feet,
And in my arms ye'se lie and sleep,
And ye sall be my dearie.
Ca' the ewes, &c.

If ye'll but stand to what ye've said,
I'se gang wi' you my shepherd-lad,
And ye may rowe me in your plaid,
And I sall be your dearie.
Ca' the ewes, &c.

While waters wimple to the sea;
While day blinks in the lift sae hie;
'Till clay-cauld death sall blin my e'e,
Ye sall be my dearie.*
Ca' the ewes, &c.

LADIE MARY ANN.

The starting verse should be restored:—Burns.

"Lady Mary Ann gaed out o' her bower,
An' she found a bonnie rose new i' the flower;
As she kiss'd its ruddy lips drapping wi' dew,
Quo' she, ye're nae sae sweet as my Charlie's mou."

* Mrs. Burns informed the Editor that the last verse of this song was written by Burns.

LADIE MARY ANN.

O Lady Mary Ann looks o'er the castle wa',
She saw three bonnie boys playing at the ba',
The youngest he was the flower amang them a';
My bonnie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet.

"O father, O father, an' ye think it fit,
We'll send him a year to the college yet;
We'll sew a green ribbon round about his hat,
And that will let them ken he's to marry yet."

Lady Mary Ann was a flower in the dew,
Sweet was its smell, and bonnie was its hue,
And the langer it blossomed, the sweeter it grew;
For the lily in the bud will be bonnier yet.

Young Charlie Cochran was the sprout of an aik,
Bonnie, and blooming, and straight was its make,
The sun took delight to shine for its sake,
And it will be the brag o' the forest yet.

The simmer is gane, when the leaves they were green;
And the days are awa that we hae seen;
But far better days, I trust, will come again,
For my bonnie laddie's young, but he's growin' yet.

KILLYCRANKY.

The battle of Killycranky was the last stand made by the Clans for James, after his abdication. Here Dundee fell in the moment of victory, and with him fell the hopes of the party.—General Mackay, when he found the Highlanders did not pursue his flying army, said, "Dundee must be killed, or he never would have overlooked this advantage."—A great stone marks the spot where Dundee fell.—Burns.

Clavers and his highland-men,
Came down upo' the raw, man,
Who being stout, gave mony a clout,
The lads began to claw, then.
With sword and terge into their hand,
Wi' which they were nae slaw, man,
Wi' mony a fearful heavy sigh,
The lads began to claw, then.

O'er bush, o'er bank, o'er ditch, o'er stank,
She flang amang them a', man;
The butter-box got mony knocks,
Their riggings paid for a' then;
They got their paiks, wi' sudden straiks,
Which to their grief they saw, man;
Wi' clinkum clankum o'er their crowns,
The lads began to fa' then.

Hur skipt about, hur leapt about,
And flang amang them a', man;
The English blades got broken heads,
Their crowns were cleav'd in twa then.
The durk and door made their last hour,
And prov'd their final fa, man;
They thought the devil had been there,
That play'd them sic a paw then.

The solemn league and covenant
Came whigging up the hills, man,
Thought highland trews durst not refuse
For to subscribe their bills then:
In Willie's name * they thought nae ane
Durst stop their course at a', man;
But hur nane sell, wi' mony a knock,
Cry'd, Furich-whiggs, awa', man.

Sir Evan Du, and his men true,
Came linking up the brink, man;
The Hogan Dutch they feared such,
They bred a horrid stink, then.
The true Maclean, and his fierce men,
Came in amang them a', man;
Nane durst withstand his heavy hand,
All fled and ran awa' then.

Oh' on a ri, oh' on a ri,
Why should she lose king Shames, man?
Oh' rig in di, oh' rig in di,
She shall break a' her banes then;
With *furichinish*, an' stay a while,
And speak a word or twa, man,
She's gi' a straike, out o'er the neck,
Before ye win awa' then.

O fy for shame, ye're three for ane,
Hur nane-sell's won the day, man;
King Shame's red-coats should be hung up,
Because they ran awa' then:
Had bent their brows, like highland trows,
And made as lang a stay, man,
They'd sav'd their king, that sacred thing,
And Willie'd 'run' awa' then.

THE EWIE WI' THE CROOKIT HORN

Another excellent song of old Skinner's.—Burns.

Were I but able to rehearse
My Ewie's praise in proper verse,
I'd sound it forth as loud and fierce
As ever piper's drone could blaw;
The Ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Wha had kent her might hae sworn
Sic a Ewe was never born,
Hereabout nor far awa',
Sic a Ewe was never born,
Hereabout nor far awa'.

I never needed tar nor keil
To mark her upo' hip or heel,

* Prince of Orange.

Her crookit horn did as weel
To ken her by amo' them a';
She never threaten'd scab nor rot,
But keepit ay her ain jog trot,
Baith to the fauld and to the coat,
Was never sweir to lead nor caw,
Baith to the fauld and to the coat, &c.

Cauld nor hunger never dang her,
Wind nor wet could never wrang her,
Anes she lay an onk and langer,
Furth aneath a wreath o' snaw:
Whan ither Ewies lap the dyke,
And eat the kail for a' the tyke,
My Ewie never play'd the like,
But tyc'd about the barn wa';
My Ewie never play'd the like, &c.

A better or a thriftier beast,
Nae honest man could weel hae wist,
For silly thing she never mist,
To hae ilk year a lamb or twa';
The first she had I gae to Jock,
To be to him a kind o' stock,
And now the laddie has a flock
O' mair nor thirty head ava';
And now the laddie has a flock, &c.

I lookit aye at even' for her,
Lest mischanter shou'd come o'er her,
Or the fowmart might devour her,
Gin the beastie bade awa;
My Ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Well deserv'd baith girse and corn,
Sic a Ewe was never born,
Here-about nor far awa.
Sic a Ewe was never born, &c.

Yet last onk, for a' my keeping,
(Wha can speak it without weeping?)
A villain cam when I was sleeping,
Sta' my Ewie, horn and a';
I sought her sair upo' the morn,
And down aneath a buss o' thorn
I got my Ewie's crookit horn,
But my Ewie was awa'.
I got my Ewie's crookit horn, &c.

O! gin I had the loun that did it,
Sworn I have as well as said it,
Tho' a' the warld should forbid it,
I wad gie his neck a thra':
I never met wi' sic a turn,
As this sin ever I was born,
My Ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Silly Ewie stown awa'.
My Ewie wi' the crookit horn, &c.

O! had she died o' crook or cauld,
As Ewies do when they grow auld,
It wad nae been, by mony fauld,
Sae sare a heart to nane o's a':
For a' the claith that we hae worn,
Frae her and her's sae aften shorn,
The loss o' her we cou'd hae born,
Had fair strae-death ta'en her awa'.
The loss o' her we cou'd hae born, &c.

But thus, poor thing, to lose her life,
Aneath a bleedy villain's knife,
I'm really fley't that our guidwife
Will never win aboon't ava:
O! a' ye bards benorth Kinghorn,
Call your muses up and mourn,
Our Ewie wi' the crookit horn,
Stown frae's, and fellt and a'!
Our Ewie wi' the crookit horn, &c.

ANDRO WI' HIS CUTTIE GUN.

This blythsome song, so full of Scottish humour and convivial merriment, is an intimate favourite at *Bridal Trystes*, and *House-heatings*. It contains a spirited picture of a country ale-house touched off with all the lightsome gaiety so peculiar to the rural muse of Caledonia, when at a fair.

Instead of the line,

"Girdle cakes weel toasted brown,"

I have heard it sung,

"Knuckled cakes weel brandert brown."

These cakes are kneaded out with the knuckles, and toasted over the red embers of wood on a gridiron. They are remarkably fine, and have a delicate relish when eaten warm with ale. On winter market nights the landlady heats them, and drops them into the *quaigh* to warm the ale:

"Weel does the cannie Kimmer ken
To gar the swats gae glibber down."

Burns.

BLYTH WAS SHE.

Blyth, blyth, blyth was she,
Blyth was she butt and ben;
And weel she loo'd a Hawick gill,
And leugh to see a tappit hen.
She took me in, and set me down,
And heght to keep me lawing-free;
But, cunning carling that she was,
She gart me birle my bawbie.

We loo'd the liquor well enough;
But waes my heart my cash was done
Before that I had quench'd my drowth,
And laith I was to pawn my shoon.
When we had three times toom'd our stoup,
And the niest chappin new begun,
Wha started in to heeze our hope,
But Andro' wi' his cutty gun.

The carling brought her kebbuck ben,
With girdle-cakes weel-toasted brown,
Well does the canny kimmer ken,
They gar the swats gae glibber down.
We ca'd the bicker aft about;
Till dawning we ne'er jee'd our bun,
And ay the cleanest drinker out
Was Andro' wi' his cutty gun.

He did like ony mavis sing,
And as I in his oxter sat,
He ca'd me ay his bonny thing,
And mony a sappy kiss I gat:
I hae been east, I hae been west,
I hae been far ayont the sun;
But the blythest lad that e'er I saw
Was Andro wi' his cutty gun!

HUGHIE GRAHAM.

THERE are several editions of this ballad.—This, here inserted, is from oral tradition in Ayrshire, where, when I was a boy, it was a popular song.—It originally, had a simple old tune, which I have forgotten.—BURNS.

OUR lords are to the mountains gane,
A hunting o' the fallow deer,
And they have gripet Hughie Graham
For stealing o' the bishop's mare.

And they have tied him hand and foot,
And led him up, thro' Stirling town;
The lads and lasses met him there,
Cried, Hughie Graham thou'rt a loun.

O lowse my right hand free, he says,
And put my braid sword in the same;
He's no in Stirling town this day,
Dare tell the tale to Hughie Graham.

Up then bespake the brave Whitefoord,
As he sat by the bishop's knee,
Five hundred white stots I'll gie you,
If ye'll let Hughie Graham free.

O haud your tongue, the bishop says,
And wi' your pleading let me be;
For tho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
Hughie Graham this day shall die.

Up then bespake the fair Whitefoord,
As she sat by the bishop's knee;
Five hundred white pence I'll gie you,
If ye'll gie Hughie Graham to me.

O haud your tongue now lady fair,
And wi' your pleading let it be;
Altho' ten Grahams were in his coat,
Its for my honor he maun die.

They've ta'en him to the gallows knowe,
He looked to the gallows tree,
Yet never colour left his cheek,
Nor ever did he blink his ee.

At length he looked round about,
To see whatever he could spy:
And there he saw his auld father,
And he was weeping bitterly.

O haud your tongue, my father dear,
And wi' your weeping let it be;
Thy weeping's sairer on my heart,
Than a' that they can do to me.

And ye may gie my brother John,
My sword that's bent in the middle clear,
And let him come at twelve o'clock,
And see me pay the bishop's mare.

And ye may gie my brother James
My sword that's bent in the middle brown,
And bid him come at four o'clock,
And see his brother Hugh cut down.

Remember me to Maggy my wife,
The niest time ye gang o'er the moor,
Tell her she staw the bishop's mare,
Tell her she was the bishop's whore.

And ye may tell my kith and kin,
I never did disgrace their blood;
And when they meet the bishop's cloak,
To mak it shorter by the hood.

LORD RONALD, MY SON.

THIS air, a very favourite one in Ayrshire, is evidently the original of Lochaber. In this manner most of our finest more modern airs have had their origin. Some early minstrel, or musical shepherd, composed the simple artless original air, which being picked up by the more learned musician, took the improved for tim bears.—BURNS.

The name is commonly sounded Ronald, or Randal.

WHERE have ye been hunting,
Lord Randal, my son?
Where have ye been hunting,
My handsome young man?
In yon wild wood, Oh mother,
So make my bed soon:
For I'm wae, and I'm weary,
And fain would lie down.

Where gat ye your dinner,
Lord Randal, my son?
Where gat ye your dinner,
My handsome young man?

O, I dined with my true love,
So make my bed soon:
For I'm wae, and I'm weary,
And fain would lie down.

O, what was your dinner,
Lord Randal, my son?
O, what was your dinner,
My handsome young man?
Eels boiled in broo, mother;
So make my bed soon:
For I'm wae, and I'm weary,
And fain would lie down.

O, where did she find them,
Lord Randal, my son?
O, where did she catch them,
My handsome young man?
'Neath the bush of brown brekan,
So make my bed soon:
For I'm wae, and I'm weary
And fain would lie down.

Now, where are your bloodhounds,
Lord Randal, my son?
What came of your bloodhounds,
My handsome young man?
They swelled and died, mother,
And sae maun I soon:
O, I am wae, and I'm weary,
And fain would lie down.

I fear you are poisoned,
Lord Randal, my son!
I fear you are poisoned,
My handsome young man!
O yes I am poisoned,—
So make my bed soon:
I am sick, sick at heart,
And I now must lie down.

LOGAN BRAES.

THERE were two old songs to this tune; one of them contained some striking lines, the other entered into the sweets of wooing rather too freely for modern poetry.—It began,

"Ae simmer night on Logan braes,
I helped a bonnie lassie on wi' her claes,
First wi' her stockins, an' syne wi' her shoon,
But she gied me the glaiks when a' was done."

The other seems older, but it is not so characteristic of Scottish courtship.

"Logan Water's wide and deep,
An' laith am I to weet my feet;
But gif ye'll consent to gang wi' me,
I'll hire a horse to carry thee."

BURNS.

ANOTHER SET.

LOGAN WATER.

BY JOHN MAYNE.

By Logan's streams that rin sae deep,
Fu' aft', wi' glee, I've herded sheep,
I've herded sheep, or gather'd slaes,
Wi' my dear lad, on Logan Braes:
But, wae's my heart, thae days are gane,
And, fu' o' grief, I herd my lane;
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan Braes!

Nae mair at Logan Kirk will he,
Atween the preachings, meet wi' me—
Meet wi' me, or, when it's mirk,
Convoy me hame frae Logan Kirk!
I weil may sing, thae days are gane—
Frae Kirk and Fair I come my lane,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan Braes!

O'ER THE MOOR AMANG THE HEATHER.

THIS song is the composition of a Jean Glover, a girl who was not only a w—e, but also a thief; and in one or other character has visited most of the Correction Houses in the West.—She was born, I believe, in Kilmarnock:—I took the song down from her singing as she was strolling through the country, with a slight-of-hand blackguard.—BURNS.

COMIN' thro' the Craigs o' Kyle,
Amang the bonnie blooming heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither.
O'er the moor amang the heather,
O'er the moor amang the heather,
There I met a bonnie lassie,
Keeping a' her yowes thegither.

Says I, my dearie, where is thy hame,
In moor or dale, pray tell me whether?
She says, I tent the fleecy flocks
That feed amang the blooming heather,
O'er the moor, &c.

We laid us down upon a bank,
Sae warm and sunny was the weather,
She left her flocks at large to rove
Amang the bonnie blooming heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

While thus we lay she sang a sang,
Till echo rang a mile and farther,
And ay the burden o' the sang
Was—o'er the moor amang the heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

She charm'd my heart, and aye sinsyne,
I could na think on any ither:
By sea and sky she shall be mine!
The bonnie lass amang the heather.
O'er the moor, &c.

BONNIE DUNDEE.

O WHARE gat ye that hauver-meal bannock,
O silly blind bodie, O dinna ye see!
I got it frae a sodger laddie,
Between Saint Johnstone and bonnie Dundee.
O gin I saw the laddie that gae me't!
Aft has he doudl'd me on his knee:
May heav'n protect my bonnie Scotch laddie,
And sen' him safe hame to his babie and me!

May blessins light on thy sweet, we lippie!
May blessins light on thy bonnie ee-bree!
Thou smiles sae like my sodger laddie,
Thou's dearer, dearer ay to me!
But I'll big a bow'r on yon bonnie banks,
Whare Tay rins wimplan by sae clear;
An' ill cleed thee in the tartan fine,
An' mak thee a man like thy daddie dear!

OLD VERSE.

Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten wood,
Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
Ye slip frae me like a knotless thread,
An' ye'll crack your credit wi' mae than me.

DONOCHT-HEAD.

Tune—"Gordon Castle."

KEEN blaws the wind o'er Donocht-Head,*
The snaw drives snelly thro' the dale,
The Gaberlunzie tirls my sneck,
And shivering tells his waefu' tale.
"Cauld is the night, O let me in,
"And dinna let your minstrel fa',
"And dinna let his windin-sheet
"Be naething but a wreath o' snaw!

"Full ninety winters hae I seen,
"And pip'd where gor-cocks whirring flew,
"And mony a day ye've dane'd, I ween,
"To lilts which frae my drone I blew."
My Eppie wak'd, and soon she cry'd,
"Get up, Guidman, and let him in;
"For weel ye ken the winter night
"Was short when he began his din."

My Eppie's voice, O wow it's sweet
E'en tho' she bans and scaulds awee;
But when it's tun'd to sorrow's tale,
O haith, it's doubly dear to me!

* A mountain in the North.

Come in, auld Carl! I'll steer my fire,
I'll mak it bleeze a bonnie flame;
Your blude is thin, ye've tint the gate,
Ye should na stray sae far frae hame.

"Nae hame have I," the minstrel said,
"Sad party strife o'erturn'd my ha';
"And, weeping at the eve o' life,
"I wander thro' a wreath o' snaw.*

. . . . . .

THE BANKS OF THE TWEED.

THIS song is one of the many attempts that English composers have made to imitate the Scottish manner, and which I shall, in these strictures, beg leave to distinguish by the appellation of Anglo-Scottish productions. The music is pretty good, but the verses are just above contempt.—BURNS.

BARNETT.

I LEFT the sweet banks of the deep flowing Tweed,
And my own little cot by the wild wood,
When Fanny was sporting through valley and mead,
In the beautiful morning of childhood.
And oftimes alone, by the wave-beaten shore,
When the billows of twilight were flowing,
I thought, as I mus'd on the days that were o'er,
How the rose on her cheek would be blowing.

I came to the banks of the deep flowing Tweed,
And mine own little cot by the wild wood,
When o'er me ten summers had gather'd their speed,
And Fanny had pass'd from her childhood.
I found her as fair as my fancy could dream,
Not a bud of her loveliness blighted,
And I wish'd I had ne'er seen her beauty's soft beam,
Or that we were for ever united.

THE FLOWERS OF EDINBURGH.

THIS Song is one of the many effusions of Scots jacobitism.—The title, *Flowers of Edinburgh*, has no manner of connexion with the present verses, so I suspect there has been an older set of words, of which the title is all that remains.

* This affecting poem was long attributed to Burns. He thus remarks on it. "*Donocht-Head* is not mine: I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the Edinburgh Herald; and came to the editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it." It was the composition of William Pickering, a north of England poet, who is not known to have written any thing more.

By the bye, it is singular enough that the Scottish Muses were all Jacobites.—I have paid more attention to every description of Scots songs than perhaps any body living has done, and I do not recollect one single stanza, or even the title of the most trifling Scots air, which has the least panegyrical reference to the families of Nassau or Brunswick; while there are hundreds satirizing them. This may be thought no panegyric on the Scots Poets, but I mean it as such. For myself, I would always take it as a compliment to have it said, that my heart ran before my head; and surely the gallant though unfortunate house of Stuart, the kings of our fathers for so many heroic ages, is a theme much more interesting than * * * *.—BURNS.

My love was once a bonny lad,
He was the flower of all his kin,
The absence of his bonny face
Has rent my tender heart in twain.
I day nor night find no delight,
In silent tears I still complain;
And exclaim 'gainst those my rival foes,
That ha'e ta'en from me my darling swain.

Despair and anguish fills my breast,
Since I have lost my blooming rose;
I sigh and moan while others rest,
His absence yields me no repose.
To seek my love I'll range and rove,
Thro' every grove and distant plain;
Thus I'll ne'er cease, but spend my days,
To hear tidings from my darling swain.

There's naething strange in Nature's change,
Since parents shew such cruelty;
They caus'd my love from me to range,
And knows not to what destiny.
The pretty kids and tender lambs
May cease to sport upon the plain;
But I'll mourn and lament in deep discontent
For the absence of my darling swain.

Kind Neptune, let me thee entreat,
To send a fair and pleasant gale;
Ye dolphins sweet, upon me wait,
And convey me on your tail;
Heavens bless my voyage with success,
While crossing of the raging main,
And send me safe o'er to that distant shore,
To meet my lovely darling swain.

All joy and mirth at our return
Shall then abound from Tweed to Tay;
The bells shall ring and sweet birds sing,
To grace and crown our nuptial day.
Thus bless'd wi' charms in my love's arms,
My heart once more I will regain;
Then I'll range no more to a distant shore,
But in love will enjoy my darling swain.

CHARLIE, HE'S MY DARLING.

OLD VERSES.

Tune—"Charlie is my darling."

'TWAS on a Monday morning,
Richt early in the year,
That Charlie cam to our toun,
The young Chevalier.
And Charlie he's my darling,
My darling, my darling;
Charlie he's my darling,
The young Chevalier.

As he was walking up the street,
The city for to view,
O there he spied a bonnie lass,
The window looking through.
And Charlie, &c.

Sae licht's he jumped up the stair,
And tirled at the pin;
And wha sae ready as hersell,
To let the laddie in!
And Charlie, &c.

He set his Jenny on his knee,
All in his Highland dress;
For brawly weel he kenned the way
To please a bonnie lass.
And Charlie, &c.

It's up yon heathy mountain,
And down yon scroggy glen,
We daurna gang a-milking,
For Charlie and his men.
And Charlie, &c

THE SOUTERS OF SELKIRK.

UP with the souters of Selkirk,
And down with the Earl of Home!
And up wi' a' the brave lads,
Wha sew the single-soled shoon!

O! fye upon yellow and yellow,
And fye upon yellow and green;
And up wi' the true blue and scarlet,
And up wi' the single-soled shoon!

Up wi' the souters of Selkirk—
Up wi' the lingle and last!
There's fame wi' the days that's coming,
And glory wi' them that are past.

Up wi' the souters of Selkirk—
Lads that are trusty and leal;
And up with the men of the Forest,
And down wi' the Merse to the deil!

O! mitres are made for noddles,
But feet they are made for shoon;

And fame is as sib to Selkirk
As light is true to the moon.

There sits a souter in Selkirk,
Wha sings as he draws his thread—
There's gallant souters in Selkirk
As lang there's water in Tweed.

CRAIL TOUN.*

"Tune—" Sir John Malcolm."

And was ye e'er in Crail toun?
Igo and ago;
And saw ye there Clerk Dishington?†
Sing irom, igon, ago.

His wig was like a doukit hen,
Igo and ago;
The tail o't like a goose-pen,
Sing irom, igon, ago.

And dinna ye ken Sir John Malcolm?
Igo and ago;
Gin he's a wise man I mistak him,
Sing irom, igon, ago.

And haud ye weel frae Sandie Don,
Igo and ago;
He's ten times dafter nor Sir John,
Sing irom, igon, ago.

To hear them o' their travels talk,
Igo and ago;
To gae to London's but a walk,
Sing irom, igon, ago.

To see the wonders o' the deep,
Igo and ago,
Wad gar a man baith wail and weep,
Sing irom, igon, ago.

To see the leviathan skip,
Igo and ago,
And wi' his tail ding ower a ship,
Sing irom, igon, ago.

* There is a somewhat different version of this strange song in Herd's Collection, 1776. The present, which I think the best, is copied from the Scottish Minstrel.

† The person known in Scottish song and tradition by the epithet Clerk Dishington, was a notary who resided about the middle of the last century in Crail, and acted as the town-clerk of that ancient burgh. I have been informed that he was a person of great local celebrity in his time, as an uncompromising humourist.

MY ONLY JO AND DEARIE, O.

GALL.*

Tune—" My only jo and dearie, O."

Thy cheek is o' the rose's hue,
My only jo and dearie, O;
Thy neck is o' the siller dew,
Upon the bank sae briery, O.
Thy teeth are o' the ivory,
O sweet's the twinkle o' thine ee:
Nae joy, nae pleasure blinks on me,
My only jo and dearie, O.

When we were bairnies on yon brae,
And youth was blinkin' bonnie, O,
Aft we wad daff the lee lang day,
Our joys fu' sweet and monie, O.
Aft I wad chase thee ower the lee,
And round about the thorny tree;
Or pu' the wild flow'rs a' for thee,
My only jo and dearie, O.

I hae a wish I canna tine,
'Mang a' the cares that grieve me, O;
A wish that thou wert ever mine,
And never mair to leave me, O;
Then I wad daut thee nicht and day,
Nae ither warldly care I'd hae,
Till life's warm stream forgat to play,
My only jo and dearie, O.

FAIRLY SHOT O' HER.

Tune—" Fairly shot o' her."

O gin I were fairly shot o' her!
Fairly, fairly, fairly shot o' her!
O gin I were fairly shot o' her!
If she were dead, I wad dance on the top o' her!

Till we were married, I couldna see licht till her;
For a month after, a' thing aye gaed richt wi' her:
But these ten years I hae prayed for a wright to her—
O gin I were fairly shot o' her!
O gin I were fairly shot o' her! &c.

Nane o' her relations or friends could stay wi' her:
The neebours and bairns are fain to flee frae her:
And I my ainsell am forced to gie way till her:
O gin I were fairly shot o' her!
O gin I were fairly shot o' her! &c.

She gangs aye sae braw, she's sae muckle pride in her;
There's no a gudewife in the haill country-side like her:

* Richard Gall, the son of a dealer in old furniture in St. Mary's Wynd, Edinburgh, was brought up to the business of a printer, and died at an early age about the beginning of the present century.

Wi' dress and wi' drink, the deil wadna bide wi' her:
O gin I were fairly shot o' her!
O gin I were fairly shot o' her! &c.

If the time were but come that to the kirk-gate wi' her,
And into the yird I'd mak mysell quit o' her,
I'd then be as blythe as first when I met wi' her:
O gin I were fairly shot o' her!
O gin I were fairly shot o' her! &c.

FALSE LUVE! AND HAE YE PLAY'D ME THIS.

False luve! and hae ye play'd me this,
In summer, 'mid the flowers?
I shall repay ye back again
In winter, 'mid the showers.

But again, dear luve, and again, dear luve,
Will ye not turn again?
As ye look to other women
Shall I to other men?*

FARE YE WEEL, MY AULD WIFE.

And fare ye weel, my auld wife;
Sing bum, bee, berry, bum;
Fare ye weel, my auld wife;
Sing bum, bum, bum.
Fare ye weel, my auld wife,
The steerer up o' sturt and strife,
The maut 's abune the meal the nicht,
Wi' some, some, some.

And fare ye weel, my pike-staff;
Sing bum, bee, berry, bum:
Fare ye weel, my pike-staff;
Sing bum, bum, bum.
Fare ye weel, my pike-staff,
Wi' you nae mair my wife I'll baff;
The maut's abune the meal the nicht,
Wi' some, some, some.

GET UP AND BAR THE DOOR.

It fell about the Martinmas time,
And a gay time it was than,
When our gudewife had puddins to mak,
And she boil'd them in the pan.
And the barrin' o' our door weil, weil, weil,
And the barrin' o' our door weil.

The wind blew cauld frae south to north,
It blew into the floor;
Says our gudeman to our gudewife,
Get up and bar the door.
And the barrin', &c.

My hand is in my hussyfe skep,
Gudeman, as ye may see;
An it shouldna be barr'd this hunner year,
It's no be barr'd for me.
And the barrin', &c.

They made a paction 'tween them twa,
They made it firm and sure,
The first that spak the foremost word
Should rise and bar the door.
And the barrin', &c.

Then by there came twa gentlemen,
At twelve o'clock at night;
And they could neither see house nor ha',
Nor coal nor candle-licht.
And the barrin', &c.

Now whether is this a rich man's house,
Or whether is this a puir?
But never a word wad ane o' them speak,
For the barrin' o' the door.
And the barrin', &c.

And first they ate the white puddins,
And syne they ate the black;
And muckle thocht our gudewife to hersell,
But never a word she spak.
And the barrin', &c.

Then said the tane unto the tother,
Hae, man, take ye my knife,
Do ye tak aff the auld man's beard,
And I'll kiss the gudewife.
And the barrin', &c.

But there's nae water in the house,
And what shall we do than?
What ails ye at the puddin' broo,
That boils into the pan?
And the barrin', &c.

O, up then startit our gudeman,
And an angry man was he:
Wad ye kiss my wife before my face,
And scaud me wi' puddin' bree?
And the barrin', &c.

Then up and startit our gudewife,
Gi'ed three skips on the floor:
Gudeman, ye've spoken the foremost word,
Get up and bar the door.*
And the barrin', &c.

* From Herd's Collection, 1776.—A slightly different version is put by Sir Walter Scott into the mouth of Davie Gellatley, in the celebrated novel of Waverley:—

"False love, and hast thou play'd me this,
In summer, among the flowers?
I will repay thee back again
In winter, among the showers.

"Unless again, again, my love,
Unless you turn again,
As you with other maidens rove,
I'll smile on other men."

* From Herd's Collection, 1776.—Tradition, as reported in Johnson's Musical Museum, affirms that the

LOGIE O' BUCHAN.

Tune—"Logie o' Buchan."

O, Logie o' Buchan, O, Logie, the laird,
They hae ta'en awa Jamie that delved in the yard;
He play'd on the pipe and the viol sae sma';
They hae ta'en awa Jamie, the flower o' them a'.
He said, Think na lang, lassie, though I gang awa;
He said, Think na lang, lassie, though I gang awa;
For the simmer is coming, cauld winter's awa,
And I'll come back and see thee in spite o' them a'.

O, Sandie has owsen, and siller, and kye,
A house and a haddin, and a' things forbye,
But I wad hae Jamie, wi's bonnet in's hand,
Before I'd hae Sandy wi' houses and land.
He said, &c.

My daddie looks sulky, my minnie looks sour,
They frown upon Jamie, because he is poor;
But daddie and minnie although that they be,
There's nane o' them a' like my Jamie to me.
He said, &c.

I sit on my creepie, and spin at my wheel,
And think on the laddie that lo'ed me sae weel;
He had but ae sixpence—he brak it in twa,
And he gi'ed me the hauf o't when he gaed awa.
Then, haste ye back, Jamie, and bide na awa,
Then haste ye back, Jamie, and bide na awa;
Simmer is comin', cauld winter's awa,
*And ye'll come and see me in spite o' them a'.**

"gudeman" of this song was a person of the name of John Blunt, who lived of yore in Crawford-Muir. There are two tunes to which it is often sung. One of them is in most of the Collections of Scottish Tunes; the other, though to appearance equally ancient, seems to have been preserved by tradition alone, as we have never seen it in print. A third tune, to which we have heard this song sung, by only one person, an American student, we suspect to have been imported from his own country.

* "Logie o' Buchan" is stated by Mr. Peter Buchan of Peterhead, in his Gleanings of Scarce Old Ballads (1827), to have been the composition of Mr. George Halket, and to have been written by him while schoolmaster of Rathen, in Aberdeenshire, about the year 1736. "The poetry of this individual," says Mr. Buchan, "was chiefly Jacobitical, and long remained familiar amongst the peasantry in that quarter of the country: One of the best known of these, at the present, is 'Wherry, Whigs, awa, man!' In 1746, Mr. Halket wrote a dialogue betwixt George II. and the Devil, which falling into the hands of the Duke of Cumberland while on his march to Culloden, he offered one hundred pounds reward for the person or the head of its author. Mr. Halket died in 1756.

"The Logie here mentioned, is in one of the adjoining parishes (Cramond) where Mr. Halket then resided; and the hero of the piece was a James Robertson, gardener at the place of Logie."

HERE'S A HEALTH TO THEM THAT'S AWA.

Tune—"Here's a health to them that's awa."

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;
Here's a health to them that were here short syne,
And canna be here the day.

It's gude to be merry and wise;
It's gude to be honest and true;
It's gude to be aff wi' the auld love,
Before ye be on wi' the new.

HEY, CA' THROUGH.

Tune—"Hey, ca' through."

Up wi' the carles o' Dysart,
And the lads o' Buckhaven,
And the kimmers o' Largo,
And the lasses o' Leven.
Hey, ca' through, ca' through,
For we hae muckle ado;
Hey, ca' through, ca' through,
For we hae muckle ado.

We hae tales to tell,
And we hae sangs to sing;
We hae pennies so spend,
And we hae pints to bring.
Hey, ca' through, &c.

We'll live a' our days;
And them that comes behin',
Let them do the like,
And spend the gear they win.
Hey, ca' through, &c.

I LO'ED NE'ER A LADDIE BUT ANE.

CLUNIE.

Tune—"My lodging is on the cold ground."

I lo'ed ne'er a laddie but ane;
He lo'ed ne'er a lassie but me;
He's willing to mak me his ain;
And his ain I am willing to be.
He has coft me a rokelay o' blue,
And a pair o' mittens o' green;
The price was a kiss o' my mou';
And I paid him the debt yestreen.

Let ithers brag weel o' their gear,
Their land, and their lordly degree;
I carena for ought but my dear,
For he's ilka thing lordly to me:
His words are sae sugar'd, sae sweet!
His sense drives ilk fear far awa!
I listen—poor fool! and I greet;
Yet how sweet are the tears as they fa'!

AYE WAUKING, O.

THE ORIGINAL SONG, FROM RECITATION.

O I'm wet, wet,
O I'm wet and weary!
Yet fain wad I rise and rin,
If I thought I would meet my deary.
Ay wauking, O!
Wauking aye, and weary,
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking o' my deary.

Simmer's a pleasant time,
Flowers of every colour,
The water rins ower the heugh—
And I lang for my true lover.
Ay wauking, &c.

When I sleep I dream,
When I wauk I'm eerie;
Sleep I can get nane
For thinking o' my deary.
Ay wauking, &c.

Lanely night comes on;
A' the lave are sleeping;
I think on my love,
And blear my een wi' greeting.
Ay wauking, &c.

Feather-beds are soft,
Painted rooms are bonnie;
But a kiss o' my dear love
Is better far than ony.
Ay wauking, &c.

KELVIN GROVE.

JOHN LYLE.

Tune—"Kelvin Grove."

Let us haste to Kelvin grove, bonnie lassie, O;
Through its mazes let us rove, bonnie lassie, O;
Where the rose in all its pride
Decks the hollow dingle's side,
Where the midnight fairies glide, bonnie lassie, O.

We will wander by the mill, bonnie lassie, O,
To the cove beside the rill, bonnie lassie, O;
Where the glens rebound the call
Of the lofty waterfall,
Through the mountain's rocky hall, bonnie lassie, O.

Then we'll up to yonder glade, bonnie lassie, O,
Where so oft, beneath its shade, bonnie lassie, O,
With the songsters in the grove,
We have told our tale of love,
And have sportive garlands wove, bonnie lassie, O.

Ah! I soon must bid adieu, bonnie lassie, O,
To this fairy scene and you, bonnie lassie, O,
To the streamlet winding clear,
To the fragrant-scented brier,
E'en to thee of all most dear, bonnie lassie, O.

For the frowns of fortune low'r, bonnie lassie, O,
On thy lover at this hour, bonnie lassie, O:
Ere the golden orb of day,
Wakes the warblers from the spray,
From this land I must away, bonnie lassie, O.

And when on a distant shore, bonnie lassie, O,
Should I fall 'midst battle's roar, bonnie lassie, O,
Wilt thou, Helen, when you hear
Of thy lover on his bier,
To his memory shed a tear, bonnie lassie? O.*

BLUE BONNETS OVER THE BORDER.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

Tune—"Blue Bonnets over the Border."

March, march, Ettrick and Teviotdale,
Why, my lads, dinna ye march forward in order?
March, march, Eskdale and Liddesdale;
All the blue bonnets are over the Border.
Many a banner spread flutters above your head;
Many a crest that is famous in story:
Mount and make ready, then, sons of the mountain glen;
Fight for your Queen and the old Scottish glory.

Come from the hills where your hirsels are grazing;
Come from the glen of the buck and the roe;
Come to the crag where the beacon is blazing;
Come with the buckler, the lance, and the bow.
Trumpets are sounding, war steeds are bounding;
Stand to your arms, and march in good order.
England shall many a day tell of the bloody fray,
When the blue bonnets came over the Border.

COMIN' THROUGH THE RYE.

Tune—"Gin a Body meet a Body.

Gin a body meet a body
Comin' through the rye,
Gin a body kiss a body,
Need a body cry?
Ev'ry lassie has her laddie,
Nane, they say, hae I!
Yet a' the lads they smile at me,
When comin' through the rye.
Amang the train there is a swain
I dearly lo'e mysell;
But whaur his hame, or what his name,
I dinna care to tell.

---

* Kelvin Grove is a beautifully wooded dell, about two miles from Glasgow, forming a sort of *lovers' walk* for the lads and lasses of that city.

Gin a body meet a body,
Comin' frae the town,
Gin a body greet a body,
Need a body frown?
Ev'ry lassie has her laddie,
Nane, they say, hae I!
Yet a' the lads they smile at me,
When comin' through the rye.
Amang the train there is a swain
I dearly lo'e mysell;
But whaur his hame, or what his name,
I dinna care to tell.

DINNA THINK, BONNIE LASSIE.

Tune—"The Smith's a gallant fireman."

O DINNA think, bonnie lassie, I'm gaun to leave thee;
Dinna think, bonnie lassie, I'm gaun to leave thee;
Dinna think, bonnie lassie, I'm gaun to leave thee;
I'll tak a stick into my hand, and come again and see thee.

Far's the gate ye hae to gang; dark's the night and eerie;
Far's the gate ye hae to gang; dark's the night and eerie;
Far's the gate ye hae to gang; dark's the night and eerie;
O stay this night wi' your love, and dinna gang and leave me.

It's but a night and hauf a day that I'll leave my dearie;
But a night and hauf a day that I'll leave my dearie;
But a night and hauf a day that I'll leave my dearie;
Whene'er the sun gaes west the loch I'll come again and see thee.

Dinna gang, my bonnie lad, dinna gang and leave me;
Dinna gang, my bonnie lad, dinna gang and leave me;
When a' the lave are sound asleep, I'm dull and eerie;
And a' the lee-lang night I 'm sad, wi' thinking on my dearie.

O dinna think, bonnie lassie, I'm gaun to leave thee;
Dinna think, bonnie lassie, I'm gaun to leave thee;
Dinna think, bonnie lassie, I'm gaun to leave thee;
When e'er the sun gaes out o' sight, I'll come again and see thee.

Waves are rising o'er the sea; winds blaw loud and fear me;
Waves are rising o'er the sea; winds blaw loud and fear me.
While the winds and waves do roar, I am wae and dreary;
And gin ye lo'e me as ye say, ye winna gang and leave me.

O never mair, bonnie lassie; will I gang and leave thee;
Never mair, bonnie lassie, will I gang and leave thee;
Never mair, bonnie lassie, will I gang and leave thee;
E'en let the world gang as it will, I'll stay at hame and cheer thee.

Frae his hand he coost his stick; I winna gang and leave thee;
Threw his plaid into the neuk; never can I grieve thee;
Drew his boots, and flang them by; cried my lass, be cheerie;
I'll kiss the tear frae aff thy cheek, and never leave my dearie.

BONNIE MARY HAY.

CRAWFORD

BONNIE Mary Hay, I will loe thee yet;
For thine eye is the slae, and thy hair is the jet;
The snaw is thy skin, and the rose is thy cheek;
O, bonnie Mary Hay, I will loe thee yet!

O, bonnie Mary Hay, will ye gang wi' me,
When the sun's in the west, to the hawthorn tree,
To the hawthorn tree, and the bonnie berry den?
And I'll tell thee, Mary Hay, how I loe thee then.

O, bonnie Mary Hay, it is haliday to me,
When thou art couthie, kind, and free;
There's nae clouds in the lift, nor storms in the sky,
Bonnie Mary Hay, when thou art nigh.

O, bonnie Mary Hay, thou mauna say me nay,
But come to the bower, by the hawthorn brae;
But come to the bower, and I'll tell ye a' what's true,
How, bonnie Mary Hay, I can loe nane but you.

CARLE, AN THE KING COME.

Tune—"Carle, an the King come."

CARLE, an the king come,
Carle, an the king come,
Thou shalt dance and I will sing,
Carle, an the king come.

An somebody were come again,
Then somebody maun cross the main ;
And every man shall hae his ain,
Carle, an the king come.

I trow we swappit for the worse ;
We ga'e the boot and better horse ;
And that we'll tell them at the corse,
Carle, an the king come.

When yellow corn grows on the rigs,
And gibbets stand to hang the Whigs,
O, then we'll a' dance Scottish jigs,
Carle, an the king come.

Nae mair wi' pinch and drouth we'll dine,
As we hae done—a dog's propine—
But quaff our draughts o' rosy wine,
Carle, an the king come.

Cogie, an the king come,
Cogie, an the king come,
I'se be fou and thou'se be toom
Cogie, an the king come.*

COME UNDER MY PLAIDIE.

MACNIEL.

Tune—"Johnny M'Gill."

Come under my plaidie ; the night's gaun to fa' ;
Come in frae the cauld blast, the drift, and the snaw :
Come under my plaidie, and sit down beside me ;
There's room in't, dear lassie, believe me, for twa.
Come under my plaidie, and sit down beside me;
I'll hap ye frae every cauld blast that can blaw:
Come under my plaidie, and sit down beside me ;
There's room in't, dear lassie, believe me, for twa.

Gae 'wa wi' yere plaidie ! auld Donald, gae 'wa ;
I fear na the cauld blast, the drift, nor the snaw !
Gae 'wa wi' your plaidie ! I'll no sit beside ye ;
Ye micht be my gutcher ! auld Donald, gae 'wa.
I'm gaun to meet Johnnie—he's young and he's bonnie ;
He's been at Meg's bridal, fou trig and fou braw !
Nane dances sae lichtly, sae gracefu', or tichtly,
His cheek's like the new rose, his brow's like the snaw !

Dear Marion, let that flee stick to the wa' ;
Your Jock's but a gowk, and has naething ava ;
The haill o' his pack he has now on his back ;
He's thretty, and I am but three score and twa.
Be frank now and kindly—I'll busk ye aye finely ;
To kirk or to market there'll few gang sae braw ;
A bien house to bide in, a chaise for to ride in,
And flunkies to 'tend ye as aft as ye ca'.

My father aye tauld me, my mother and a',
Ye'd mak a gude husband, and keep me aye braw ;
It's true, I lo'e Johnnie ; he's young and he's bonnie ;
But, wae's me ! I ken he has naething ava !
I hae little tocher ; ye've made a gude offer ;
I'm now mair than twenty ; my time is but sma' !
Sae gie my your plaidie ; I'll creep in beside ye ;
I thocht ye'd been aulder than three score and twa !

She crap in ayont him, beside the stane wa',
Whare Johnnie was listnin', and heard her tell a':
The day was appointed !—his proud heart it dunted,
And strack 'gainst his side, as if burstin' in twa.
He wander'd hame wearie, the nicht it was drearie,
And, thowless, he tint his gate 'mang the deep snaw :
The howlet was screamin', while Johnnie cried, Women
Wad marry auld Nick, if he'd keep them aye braw.

O, the deil's in the lasses ! they gang now sae braw,
They'll lie down wi' auld men o' fourscore and twa ;
The hail o' their marriage is gowd and a carriage ;
Plain love is the cauldest blast now that can blaw.
Auld dotards, be wary ! tak tent when ye marry ;
Young wives, wi' their coaches, they'll whip and they'll ca',
Till they meet wi' some Johnnie that's youthfu' and bonnie,
And they'll gie ye horns on ilk haffet to claw.

DUSTY MILLER.

Tune—"The dusty Miller."

Hey, the dusty miller,
And his dusty coat !
He will win a shilling,
Ere he spend a groat.
Dusty was the coat,
Dusty was the colour;
Dusty was the kiss,
That I gat frae the miller !

* This is an old favourite cavalier song; the chorus, at least, is as old as the time of the Commonwealth, when the return of King Charles II. was a matter of daily prayer to the Loyaliste.

Hey, the dusty miller.
And his dusty sack!
Leeze me on the calling
Fills the dusty peck;
Fills the dusty peck,
Brings the dusty siller:
I wad gie my coatie
For the dusty miller.

THE WEARY PUND O' TOW.

FROM RECITATION.

Tune—"The weary pund o' tow."

I BOUGHT my wife a stane o' lint
As good as ere did grow,
And a' that she could make o' that
Was ae weary pund o' tow.
The weary pund, the weary pund,
The weary pund o' tow,
I thought my wife would end her life
Before she span her tow.

I lookit to my yarn-nag,
And it grew never mair;
I lookit to my beef-stand—
My heart grew wonder sair;
I lookit to my meal-boat,
And O, but it was howe!
I think my wife will end her life
Afore she spin her tow.

But if your wife and my wife
Were in a boat thegither,
And yon other man's wife
Were in to steer the ruther;
And if the boat were bottomless,
And seven mile to row,
I think they'd ne'er come hame again,
To spin the pund o' tow!

THE LANDART LAIRD.

THERE lives a landart* laird in Fife,
And he has married a dandily wife:
She wadna shape, nor yet wad she sew,
But sit wi' her cummers, and fill hersell fu'.

She wadna spin, nor yet wad she card;
But she wad sit and crack wi' the laird.
Sae he is doun to the sheep-fauld,
And cleekit a wether† by the spauld.‡

He's whirled aff the gude wether's skin,
And wrapped the dandily lady therein.
"I downa pay you, for your gentle kin;
But weel may I skelp my wether's skin.§

* *Landward*—that is, living in a part of the country at some distance from any town.

† Wedder. ‡ Shoulder.

§ This curious and most amusing old ditty is from Mr. Jamieson's "Popular Ballads and Songs," 1806.

KEEP THE COUNTRY, BONNIE LASSIE.

Tune—"Keep the Country, bonnie Lassie."

KEEP the country, bonnie lassie,
Keep the country, keep the country;
Keep the country, bonnie lassie;
Lads will a' gie gowd for ye:

Gowd for ye, bonnie lassie,
Gowd for ye, gowd for ye:
Keep the country, bonnie lassie;
Lads will a' gie gowd for ye.

HAP AND ROW THE FEETIE O'T.

WILLIAM CREECH.*

Tune—"Hap and Rowe the Feetie o't."

We'll hap and row, we'll hap and row,
We'll hap and row the feetie o't.
It is a wee bit weary thing:
I downa bide the greetie o't.

AND we pat on the wee bit pan,
To boil the lick o' meatie o't;
A cinder fell and spoil'd the plan,
And burnt a' the feetie o't.
We'll hap and row, &c.

Fu' sair it grat, the puir wee brat,
And aye it kicked the feetie o't,
Till, puir wee elf, it tired itself;
And then began the sleepie o't.
We'll hap and row, &c.

The skirling brat nae parritch gat,
When it gaed to the sleepie o't;
It's waesome true, instead o' t's mou',
They're round about the feetie o't.
We'll hap and row, &c.

JUMPIN' JOHN.

Tune—"Jumpin' John."

HER daddie forbade, her minnie forbade;
Forbidden she wadna be.
She wadna trow't, the browst she brewed,
Wad taste sae bitterlie.
The lang lad they ca' Jumpin' John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie;
The lang lad they ca' Jumpin' John
Beguiled the bonnie lassie.

* A gentleman long at the head of the bookselling trade in Edinburgh, and who had been Lord Provost of the city. A volume of his miscellaneous prose essays has been published, under the title of "Edinburgh Fugitive Pieces." He was not only remarkable for his literary accomplishments, but also for his conversational powers, which were such as to open to him the society of the highest literary men of his day.

A cow and a cauf, a yowe and a hauf,
And thretty gude shillings and three;
A very gude tocher, a cottarman's dochter,
The lass wi' the bonnie black ee.
The lang lad, &c.

O DEAR! MINNIE, WHAT SHALL I DO?

Tune—"O dear! mother, what shall I do?"

"Oh dear! minnie, what shall I do?
Oh dear! minnie, what shall I do?
Oh dear! minnie, what shall I do?"
"Daft thing, doiled thing, do as I do."

"If I be black, I canna be lo'ed;
If I be fair, I canna be gude;
If I be lordly, the lads will look by me;
Oh dear! minnie, what shall I do?"

"Oh dear! minnie, what shall I do?
Oh dear! minnie, what shall I do?
Oh dear! minnie, what shall I do?"
"Daft thing, doiled thing, do as I do."

KILLIECRANKIE, O.

Tune—"The braes o' Killiecrankie."

Where hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Where hae ye been sae brankie, O?
Where hae ye been sae braw, lad?
Cam ye by Killiecrankie, O?
An ye had been where I hae been,
Ye wadna been sae cantie, O;
An ye had seen what I hae seen
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.

I've faught at land, I've faught at sea;
At hame I faught my auntie, O;
But I met the deevil and Dundee,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O!
An ye had been, &c.

The bauld Pitcur fell in a fur,
And Claverse gat a clankie, O;
Or I had fed an Athole gled,
On the braes o' Killiecrankie, O.
An ye had been, &c.

DONALD COUPER.

Tune—"Donald Couper and his man."

Hey Donald, howe Donald,
Hey Donald Couper!
He's gane awa to seek a wife,
And he's come hame without her.

O Donald Couper and his maw
Held to a Highland fair, man;
And a' to seek a bonnie lass—
But fient a ane was there, man.

At length he got a carline gray,
And she's come hirplin hame, man;
And she's fawn owre the buffet stool,
And brak her rumple-bane, man.

LITTLE WAT YE WHA'S COMING.

Tune—"Little wat ye wha's coming."

Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming;
Jock and Tam and a' 's coming!

Duncan's coming, Donald's coming,
Colin's coming, Ronald's coming,
Dougal's coming, Lauchlan's coming,
Alister and a' 's coming!

Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming;
Jock and Tam and a' 's coming!

Borland and his meu's coming,
The Camerons and Maclean's coming,
The Gordons and Macgregor's coming,
A' the Duniewastles coming!

Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming;
MacGilvray o' Drumglass is coming!

Winton's coming, Nithsdale's coming,
Carnwath's coming, Kenmure's coming,
Derwentwater and Foster's coming,
Withrington and Nairn's coming!

Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming;
Blythe Cowhill and a' 's coming!

The Laird o' Macintosh is coming,
Macrabie and Macdonald's coming,
The Mackenzies and Macphersons coming,
A' the wild MacCraws coming!

Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming;
Donald Gun and a' 's coming!

They gloom, they glowr, they look sae big,
At ilka stroke they'll fell a Whig;
They'll fright the fuds of the Pockpuds;
For mony a buttock bare's coming.

Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming,
Little wat ye wha's coming;
Mony a buttock bare's coming!

OCH HEY, JOHNNIE LAD.

TANNAHILL.

Och hey, Johnnie lad,
Ye're no sae kind's ye sou'd hae been;
Och hey, Johnnie lad,
Ye didna keep your tryst yestreen.
I waited lang beside the wood,
Sae wae and weary a' my lane:
Och hey, Johnnie lad,
It was a waefu' nicht yestreen!

I lookit by the whinny knowe,
I lookit by the firs sae green;
I lookit ower the spunkie howe,
And aye I thocht ye wad hae been.
The ne'er a supper cross'd my craig,
The ne'er a sleep has closed my een:
Och hey, Johnnie lad,
Ye're no sae kind's ye sou'd hae been

Gin ye were waitin' by the wood,
It's I was waitin' by the thorn;
I thocht it was the place we set,
And waited maist till dawnin' morn.
But be nae beat, my bonnie lass,
Let my waitin' stand for thine;
We'll awa to Craigton shaw,
And seek the joys we tint yestreen.

OUR GUDEMAN CAM' HAME AT E'EN.

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
And hame cam he;
And there he saw a saddle-horse,
Where nae horse should be.
Oh, how cam this horse here?
How can this be?
How cam this horse here?
Without the leave o' me?
A horse! quo' she;
Aye, a horse, quo' he.
Ye auld blind dotard carle,
And blinder mat ye be!
It's but a bonnie milk-cow,
My mither sent to me.
A milk-cow! quo' he;
Aye, a milk-cow, quo' she.
Far hae I ridden,
And muckle hae I seen;
But a saddle on a milk-cow
Saw I never nane.

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
And hame cam he;
He spied a pair o' jack-boots,
Where nae boots should be.
What's this now, gudewife?
What's this I see?
How cam thae boots here,
Without the leave o' me?
Boots! quo' she;
Aye, boots, quo' he.
Ye auld blind dotard carle,
And blinder mat ye be!
It's but a pair o' water-stoups,
The cooper sent to me.
Water-stoups! quo' he;
Aye, water-stoups, quo' she.
Far hae I ridden,
And muckle hae I seen;
But siller-spurs on water-stoups
Saw I never nane.

Our gudeman cam hame at e'een,
And hame cam he;
And there he saw a siller sword,
Where nae sword should be.
What's this now, gudewife?
What's this I see?
O how cam this sword here,
Without the leave o' me?
A sword! quo' she;
Aye, a sword, quo' he.
Ye auld blind dotard carle,
And blinder mat ye be!
It's but a parridge-spurtle,
My minnie sent to me.
A parridge-spurtle! quo' he;
Aye, a parridge-spurtle, quo' she.
Weel, far hae I ridden,
And muckle hae I seen;
But siller-handed parridge-spurtles
Saw I never nane.

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
And hame cam he;
And there he spied a powder'd wig,
Where nae wig should be.
What's this now, gudewife?
What's this I see?
How cam this wig here,
Without the leave o' me?
A wig! quo' she;
Aye, a wig, quo' he.
Ye auld blind dotard carle,
And blinder mat ye be!
'Tis naething but a clocken-hen
My minnie sent to me.
A clocken-hen! quo' he;
Aye, a clocken-hen, quo' she.
Far hae I ridden,
And muckle hae I seen,
But pouther on a clocken-hen
Saw I never nane.

Our gudeman cam hame at e'en,
And hame cam he;

And there he saw a mickle coat,
Where nae coat should be.
How cam this coat here?
How can this be?
How cam this coat here,
Without the leave o' me?
A coat! quo' she;
Aye, a coat, quo' he.
Ye auld blind dotard carle,
And blinder mat ye be!
It's but a pair o' blankets
My minnie sent to me.
Blankets! quo' he;
Aye, blankets, quo' she.
Far hae I ridden,
And muckle hae I seen;
But buttons upon blankets
Saw I never nane!

Ben gaed our gudeman,
And ben gaed he;
And there he spied a sturdy man,
Where nae man should be.
How cam this man here?
How can this be?
How cam this man here,
Without the leave o' me?
A man! quo' she;
Aye, a man, quo' he.
Puir blind body,
And blinder mat you be!
It's but a new milkin' maid,
My mither sent to me.
A maid! quo' he;
Aye, a maid, quo' she.
Far hae I ridden,
And muckle hae I seen,
But lang-bearded maidens
Saw I never nane.

GO TO BERWICK, JOHNIE.

Tune—"Go to Berwick Johnie."

Go to Berwick, Johnie;
Bring her frae the Border;
Yon sweet bonnie lassie,
Let her gae nae farther.
English loons will twine ye
O' the lovely treasure;
But we'll let them ken,
A sword wi' them we'll measure.

Go to Berwick, Johnie,
And regain your honour;
Drive them ower the Tweed,
And show our Scottish banner.
I am Rob the king,
And ye are Jock, my brither;
But, before we lose her,
We'll a' there thegither.*

* This popular rant is from Johnson's Musical Museum, vol. VI., 1803. Ritson, in his Scottish Songs, 1793, mentions, that he had heard it gravely asserted at Edinburgh, that "a foolish song, beginning,

Go, go, go, go to Berwick, Johnie!
Thou shalt have the horse, and I shall have the poney!

was made upon one of Wallace's marauding expeditions, and that the person thus addressed was no other than his *fidus Achates*, Sir John Graham."

IF YE'LL BE MY DAWTIE, AND SIT IN MY PLAID.

Tune—"Hie, Bonnie Lassie."

Hie, bonnie lassie, blink over the burn,
And if your sheep wander I'll gie them a turn;
Sae happy as we'll be on yonder green shade,
If ye'll be my dawtie, and sit in my plaid.

A yowe and twa lammies are a' my haill stock,
But I'll sell a lammie out o' my wee flock,
To buy thee a head-piece, sae bonnie and braid,
If ye'll be my dawtie, and sit in my plaid.

I hae little siller, but ae hauf-year's fee,
But if ye will tak' it, I'll gie't a' to thee;
And then we'll be married, and lie in ae bed,
If ye'll be my dawtie, and sit in my plaid.

I'LL NEVER LEAVE THEE.

RAMSAY.

JOHNNY.

Though, for seven years and mair, honour should reave me
To fields where cannons rair, thou needsna grieve thee;
For deep in my spirit thy sweets are indented;
And love shall preserve ay what love has imprinted.
Leave thee, leave thee, I'll never leave thee,
Gang the warld as it will, dearest, believe me!

NELLY.

Oh, Johnny, I'm jealous, whene'er ye discover
My sentiments yielding, ye'll turn a loose rover;
And nought in the world would vex my heart sairer,
If you prove inconstant, and fancy ane fairer.
Grieve me, grieve me, oh, it wad grieve me,
A' the lang night and day, if you deceive me!

JOHNNY.

My Nelly, let never sic fancies oppress ye;
For, while my blood's warm, I'll kindly caress ye:
Your saft blooming beauties first kindled love's fire,
Your virtue and wit mak it ay flame the higher.
Leave thee, leave thee, I'll never leave thee,
Gang the world as it will, dearest, believe me!

NELLY.

Then, Johnny! I frankly this minute allow ye
To think me your mistress, for love gars me
trow ye;
And gin ye prove false, to yoursell be it said,
then,
Ye win but sma' honour to wrang a puir maiden.
Reave me, reave me, oh, it would reave me
Of my rest, night and day, if you deceive me!

JOHNNY.

Bid ice-shogles hammer red gauds on the studdy,
And fair summer mornings nae mair appear
ruddy;
Bid Britons think ae gate, and when they obey
thee,
But never till that time, believe I'll betray thee.
Leave thee, leave thee! I'll never leave thee!
The starns shall gae withershins ere I deceive
thee!

KATHERINE OGIE.

As walking forth to view the plain,
Upon a morning early,
While May's sweet scent did cheer my brain,
From flowers which grow so rarely,
I chanced to meet a pretty maid;
She shined, though it was foggy;
I ask'd her name: sweet Sir, she said,
My name is Katherine Ogie.

I stood a while, and did admire,
To see a nymph so stately;
So brisk an air there did appear,
In a country maid so neatly:
Such natural sweetness she display'd,
Like a lilie in a bogie;
Diana's self was ne'er array'd
Like this same Katherine Ogie.

Thou flower of females, beauty's queen,
Who sees thee, sure must prize thee;
Though thou art drest in robes but mean,
Yet these cannot disguise thee:
Thy handsome air, and graceful look,
Far excels any clownish rogie;
Thou art a match for lord or duke,
My charming Katherine Ogie.

O were I but some shepherd swain!
To feed my flock beside thee,
At boughting-time to leave the plain,
In milking to abide thee;
I'd think myself a happier man,
With Kate, my club, and dogie,
Than he that hugs his thousands ten,
Had I but Katherine Ogie.

OWER BOGIE.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

Tune—"O'er Bogie."

I WILL awa' wi' my love,
I will awa' wi' her,
Though a' my kin had sworn and said,
I'll ower Bogie wi' her.
If I can get but her consent,
I dinna care a strae;
Though ilka ane be discontent,
Awa' wi her I'll gae.

For now she's mistress o' my heart,
And wordy o' my hand;
And weel, I wat, we shanna part
For siller or for land.
Let rakes delight to swear and drink,
And beaux admire fine lace;
But my chief pleasure is to blink
On Betty's bonnie face.

I will awa' wi' my love,
I will awa' wi' her,
Though a' my kin had sworn and said,
I'll o'er Bogie wi' her.

LASS, GIN YE LO'E ME.

JAMES TYTLER.

Tune—"Lass, gin ye lo'e me."

I HAE laid a herring in saut—
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now;
I hae brew'd a forpit o' maut,
An' I canna come ilka day to woo:
I hae a calf that will soon be a cow—
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now;
I hae a stook, and I'll soon hae a mowe,
And I canna come ilka day to woo:

I hae a house upon yon moor—
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now;
Three sparrows may dance upon the floor,
And I canna come ilka day to woo:
I hae a but, an' I hae a ben—
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now;
A penny to keep, and a penny to spen',
An' I canna come ilka day to woo:

I hae a hen wi' a happitie-leg—
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now;
That ilka day lays me an egg,
An' I canna come ilka day to woo:
I hae a cheese upon my skelf—
Lass, gin ye lo'e me, tell me now;
And soon wi' mites 'twill rin itself,
And I canna come ilka day to woo.

LASSIE, LIE NEAR ME.

DR. BLACKLOCK.

Tune—"Laddie, lie near me."

Lang hae we parted been,
Lassie, my deerie;
Now we are met again,
Lassie, lie near me.

Near me, near me,*
Lassie, lie near me.
Lang hast thou lain thy lane;
Lassie, lie near me.

A' that I hae endured,
Lassie, my dearie,
Here in thy arms is cured;
Lassie, lie near me.

LOW DOUN I' THE BRUME.*

Tune—"Low doun i' the Broom."

My daddie is a cankert carle,
He'll no twine wi' his gear;
My minnie she's a scauldin' wife,
Hauds a' the house asteer.
But let them say, or let them do,
It's a' ane to me,
For he's low doun, he's in the brume,
That's waitin' on me:
Waiting on me, my love,
He's waiting on me:
For he's low doun, he's in the brume,
That's waitin' on me.

My auntie Kate sits at her wheel,
And sair she lightlies me;
But weel I ken it's a' envy,
For ne'er a joe has she.
And let them say, &c.

My cousin Kate was sair beguiled
Wi' Johnnie o' the Glen;
And aye sinsyne she cries, Beware
O' fause deluding men.
And let them say, &c.

Gleed Sandy he cam wast yestreen,
And speir'd when I saw Pate;
And aye sinsyne the neebors round
They jeer me air and late.
And let them say, &c.

* The chorus of this song is very old: tradition ascribes the verses to a Laird of Balnamoon in Forfarshire: but upon that point the learned differ. It is one of the most popular ditties in Scotland.

THE CAMPBELLS ARE COMING.

Tune—"The Campbells are coming."

The Campbells are coming, O-ho, O-ho!
The Campbells are coming, O-ho!
The Campbells are coming to bonnie Lochleven!
The Campbells are coming, O-ho, O-ho!

Upon the Lomonds I lay, I lay;
Upon the Lomonds I lay;
I lookit doun to bonnie Lochleven,
And saw three perches play.
The Campbells are coming, &c.

Great Argyle he goes before;
He makes the cannons and guns to roar;
With sound o' trumpet, pipe, and drum;
The Campbells are coming, O-ho, O-ho!
The Campbells are coming, &c.

The Campbells they are a' in arms,
Their loyal faith and truth to show,
With banners rattling in the wind;
The Campbells are coming, O-ho, O-ho! *
The Campbells are coming, &c.

MERRY HAE I BEEN TEETHING A HECKLE.

Tune—"Lord Breadalbane's March."

O merry hae I been teething a heckle,
And merry hae I been shapin a spune;
O merry hae I been cloutin a kettle,
And kissin my Katie when a' was done.
O a' the lang day I ca' at my hammer,
And a' the lang day I whistle and sing;
A' the lang nicht I cuddle my kimmer,
And a' the lang nicht as happy's a king.

Bitter in dule I lickit my winnins,
O' marrying Bess, to gie her a slave:
Blest be the hour she cooled in her linens,
And blythe be the bird that sings over her grave!
Come to my arms, my Katie, my Katie,
And come to my arms, my Katie again!
Drucken or sober, here's to thee, Katie!
And blest be the day I did it again!

* From Johnson's Musical Museum, Part III., 1790; where it is insinuated, as an *on dit*, that it was composed on the imprisonment of Queen Mary in Lochleven Castle. The Lomonds are two well-known hills, overhanging Lochleven to the east, and visible from Edinburgh. The air is the well-known family tune or march of the Clan Campbell.

MY AULD MAN.

Tune—"Saw ye my Father?"

In the land of Fife there lived a wicked wife,
And in the town of Cupar then,
Who sorely did lament, and made her complaint,
Oh when will ye die, my auld man?

In cam her cousin Kate, when it was growing late,
She said, What's gude for an auld man?
O wheit-breid and wine, and a kinnen new slain;
That's gude for an auld man.

Cam ye in to jeer, or cam ye in to scorn,
And what for cam ye in?
For bear-bread and water, I'm sure, is much better—
It's ower gude for an auld man.

Now the auld man's deid, and, without remeid,
Into his cauld grave he's gane:
Lie still wi' my blessing! of thee I hae nae missing;
I'll ne'er mourn for an auld man.

Within a little mair than three quarters of a year,
She was married to a young man then,
Who drank at the wine, and tippled at the beer,
And spent more gear than he wan.

O black grew her brows, and howe grew her een,
And cauld grew her pat and her pan:
And now she sighs, and aye she says,
I wish I had my silly auld man!*

FOR THE SAKE OF SOMEBODY

OLD VERSES.

Tune—"Somebody."

For the sake of somebody,
For the sake of somebody,
I could wake a winter nicht,
For the sake of somebody.

I am gaun to seek a wife,
I am gaun to buy a plaidy;
I have three stane o' woo';
Carline, is thy daughter ready?
For the sake of somebody, &c.

Betty, lassy, say't thysell,
Though thy dame be ill to shoe:
First we'll buckle, then we'll tell;
Let her flyte, and syne come to.
What signifies a mother's gloom,
When love and kisses come in play?
Should we wither in our bloom,
And in simmer mak nae hay?
For the sake of somebody, &c.

Bonny lad, I carena by,
Though I try my luck wi' thee,
Since ye are content to tie
The half-mark bridal-band wi' me.
I'll slip hame and wash my feet,
And steal on linens fair and clean;
Syne at the trysting-place we'll meet,
To do but what my dame has done.
For the sake of somebody,
For the sake of somebody,
I could wake a winter nicht,
For the sake of somebody.

SANDY O'ER THE LEE.

Tune—"Sandy o'er the lee."

I winna marry ony man but Sandy ower the lee,
I winna marry ony man but Sandy ower the lee;
I winna hae the dominie, for gude he canna be;
But I will hae my Sandy lad, my Sandy ower the lee:
For he's aye a-kissing, kissing, aye a-kissing me;
He's aye a-kissing, kissing, aye a-kissing me.

I winna hae the minister, for all his godly looks;
Nor yet will I the lawyer hae, for a' his wily crooks;
I winna hae the ploughman lad, nor yet will I the miller,
But I will hae my Sandy lad, without a penny siller.
For he's aye a-kissing, &c.

I winna hae the soldier lad, for he gangs to the wars;
I winna hae the sailor lad, because he smells o' tar;
I winna hae the lord, or laird, for a' their meikle gear,
But I will hae my Sandy lad, my Sandy o'er the muir.
For he's aye a-kissing, &c.

MY LOVE, SHE'S BUT A LASSIE YET.

Tune—"My Love is but a lassie yet."

My love, she's but a lassie yet;
My love, she's but a lassie yet;

* From Ritson's "Scottish Songs," 1793, into which the editor mentions that it was copied from some common collection, whose title he did not remember. It has often been the task of the Scottish muse to point out the evils of ill-assorted alliances; but she has scarcely ever done so with so much humour, and, at the same time, so much force of moral painting, as in the present case. No tune is assigned to the song in Ritson's Collection; but the present editor has ventured to suggest the fine air, "Saw ye my father," rather as being suitable to the peculiar rhythm of the verses, than to the spirit of the composition.

I'll let her stand a year or twa;
She'll no be half sae saucy yet.

I RUE the day I sought her, O;
I rue the day I sought her, O;
Wha gets her, needna say he's woo'd,
But he may say he's bought her, O.
My love, she's, &c.

Come draw a drap o' the best o't yet;
Come draw a drap o' the best o't yet;
Gae seek for pleasure where ye will—
But here I never miss'd it yet.
My love, she's, &c.

We're a' dry wi' drinking o't;
We're a' dry wi' drinking o't;
The minister kiss'd the fiddler's wife,
And couldna preach for thinking o't.
My love, she's, &c.

MY WIFE HAS TA'EN THE GEE.

Tune—"My Wife has ta'en the Gee."

A FRIEND o' mine cam here yestreen,
And he wad hae me down
To drink a bottle o' ale wi' him
In the neist burrows town:
But oh, indeed, it was, Sir,
Sae far the waur for me;
For, lang or e'er that I cam hame,
My wife had tane the gee.

We sat sae late, and drank sae stout,
The truth I tell to you,
That, lang or e'er the midnicht cam,
We a' were roarin' fou.
My wife sits at the fireside,
And the tear blinds aye her ee;
The ne'er a bed wad she gang to,
But sit and tak' the gee.

In the mornin' sune, when I cam doun,
The ne'er a word she spake;
But mony a sad and sour look,
And aye her head she'd shake.
My dear, quoth I, what aileth thee,
To look sae sour on me?
I'll never do the like again,
If you'll ne'er tak' the gee.

When that she heard, she ran, she flang
Her arms about my neck;
And twenty kisses, in a crack;
And, poor wee thing, she grat.
If you'll ne'er do the like again,
But bide at hame wi' me,
I'll lay my life, I'll be the wife
That never taks the gee.*

* From Herd's collection, 1776.

THE BONNIE LASS O' BRANKSOME.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

Tune—"The Bonnie Lass o' Branksome."

As I came in by Teviot side,
And by the braes of Branksome,
There first I saw my bonny bride,
Young, smiling, sweet, and handsome.
Her skin was safter than the down,
And white as alabaster;
Her hair, a shining, waving brown;
In straightness nane surpass'd her.

Life glow'd upon her lip and cheek,
Her clear een were surprising,
And beautifully turn'd her neck,
Her little breasts just rising:
Nae silken hose with gushats fine,
Or shoon with glancing laces,
On her bare leg, forbade to shine
Weel-shapen native graces.

Ae little coat and bodice white
Was sum o' a' her claithing;
E'en these o'er muckle;—mair delyte
She'd given clad wi' naething.
We lean'd upon a flowery brae,
By which a burnie trotted;
On her I glowr'd my soul away,
While on her sweets I doated.

A thousand beauties of desert
Before had scarce alarm'd me,
Till this dear artless struck my heart,
And, bot designing, charm'd me.
Hurried by love, close to my breast
I clasp'd this fund of blisses,—
Wha smiled, and said, Without a priest,
Sir, hope for nocht but kisses.

I had nae heart to do her harm,
And yet I couldna want her;
What she demanded, ilka charm
O' hers pled I should grant her.
Since heaven had dealt to me a routh,
Straight to the kirk I led her;
There plighted her my faith and trouth,
And a young lady made her.*

MY WIFE'S A WANTON WEE THING.

Tune—"My wife's a wanton wee thing."

My wife's a wanton wee thing,
My wife's a wanton wee thing,

* This song, which appeared in the Tea-Table Miscellany, (1724), was founded upon a real incident. The *bonnie lass* was daughter to a woman who kept an alehouse at the hamlet near Branksome Castle, in Teviotdale. A young officer, of some rank,—his name we believe was Maitland,—happened to be be quartered somewhere in the neighbourhood, saw, loved, and married her. So strange was such an alliance deemed in those days, that the old mother, under whose auspices it was performed, did not escape the imputation of witchcraft.

My wife's a wanton wee thing;
She winna be guided by me.

She play'd the loon ere she was married,
She play'd the loon ere she was married,
She play'd the loon ere she was married;
She'll do't again ere she die!

She sell'd her coat, and she drank it,
She sell'd her coat, and she drank it,
She row'd hersell in a blanket;
She winna be guided by me.

She mind't na when I forbade her,
She mind't na when I forbade her;
I took a rung and I claw'd her,
And a braw gude bairn was she!*

WE'RE A' NODDIN.

Tune—"Nid noddin.'

O, we're a' noddin, nid, nid, noddin,
O, we're a' noddin, at our house at hame.

How's a' wi' ye, kimmer? and how do ye thrive?
And how mony bairns hae ye now?—Bairns I hae five.
And are they a' at hame wi' you?—Na, na, na;
For twa o' them's been herdin' sin' Jamie gaed awa.
And we're a' noddin, nid, nid, noddin;
And we're a' noddin, at our house at hame.

Grannie nods i' the neuk, and fends as she may,
And brags that we'll ne'er be what she's been in her day.
Vow! but she was bonnie; and vow! but she was braw,
And she had rowth o' wooers ance, I'se warrant, great and sma.'
And we're a' noddin, &c.

Weary fa' Kate, that she winna nod too;
She sits i' the corner, suppin' a' the broo;
And when the bit bairnies wad e'en hae their share,
She gies them the ladle, but deil a drap's there.
And we're a' noddin, &c.

Now, fareweel, kimmer, and weel may ye thrive;
They sae the French is rinnin' for't, and we'll hae peace belyve.
The bear's i' the brear, and the hay's i' the stack,
And a' 'll be right wi' us, gin Jamie were come back.
And we're a noddin', &c.

* From Johnson's Scots Musical Museum, vol. III. 1790. The two first stanzas, however, appear in Herd's collection, 1776.

MY NATIVE CALEDONIA.

Sair, sair was my heart, when I parted frae my Jean,
And sair, sair I sigh'd, while the tears stood in my een;
For my daddie is but poor, and my fortune is but sma';
Which gars me leave my native Caledonia.

When I think on days now gane, and how happy I hae been,
While wandering wi' my dearie, where the primrose blaws unseen;
I'm wae to leave my lassie, and my daddie's simple ha',
Or the hills and healthfu' breeze o' Caledonia.

But wherever I wander, still happy be my Jean!
Nae care disturb her bosom, where peace has ever been!
Then, though ills on ills befa' me, for her I'll bear them a',
Though aft I'll heave a sigh for Caledonia.

But should riches e'er be mine, and my Jeanie still be true,
Then blaw, ye favourin' breezes, till my native land I view;
Then I'll kneel on Scotia's shore, while the heart-felt tear shall fa',
And never leave my Jean and Caledonia.

O, AN YE WERE DEID, GUIDMAN.

Tune—"O, an ye war deid, Guidman."

O, an ye were deid, guidman,
And a green truff on your heid, guidman,
That I might ware my widowheid
Upon a rantin Highlandman.

There's sax eggs in the pan, guidman,
There's sax eggs in the pan, guidman;
There's ane to you, and twa to me,
And three to our John Highlandman.

There's beef into the pot, guidman,
There's beef into the pot, guidman;
The banes for you, and the broe for me,
And the beef for our John Highlandman.

There's sax horse in the sta', guidman,
There's sax horse in the sta', guidman;
There's ane to you, and twa to me,
And three to our John Highlandman.

There's sax kye in the byre, guidman,
There's sax kye in the byre, guidman;
There's nane o' them yours, but there's twa o them mine,
And the lave is our John Highlandman's.

OH, WHAT A PARISH!

ADAM CRAWFORD.

Tune—"Bonnie Dundee."

O, what a parish, what a terrible parish,
O, what a parish is that of Dunkell!
They hae hangit the minister, drouned the precentor,
Dung down the steeple, and drucken the bell!

Though the steeple was doun, the kirk was still stannin;
They biggit a lum where the bell used to hang;
A stell-pat they gat, and they brewed Hieland whisky;
On Sundays they drank it, and rantit and sang!
O, what a parish, &c.

Oh, had you but seen how gracefu' it luikit,
To see the crammed pews sae socially join!
Macdonald, the piper, stuck up i' the poupit,
He made the pipes skirl sweet music divine!
O, what a parish, &c.

When the heart-cheerin spirit had mountit the garret,
To a ball on the green they a' did adjourn;
Maids, wi' their coats kiltit, they skippit and liltit;
When tired, they shook hands, and a hame did return.
O, what a parish, &c.

Wad the kirks in our Britain haud sic social meetings,
Nae warning they'd need frae a far-tinkling bell;
For true love and friendship wad ca' them thegither,
Far better than roaring o' horrors o' hell.*
O, what parish, &c.

OLD KING COUL.

Old King Coul was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he;
And old King Coul he had a brown bowl,
And they brought him in fiddlers three;
And every fiddler was a very good fiddler,
And a very good fiddler was he:
Fiddle-diddle, fiddle-diddle, went the fiddlers three:
And there's no a lass in a' Scotland,
Compared to our sweet Marjorie.

Old King Coul was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he;
Old King Coul, he had a brown bowl,
And they brought him in pipers three:
Ha-diddle, how-diddle, ha-diddle, how-diddle, went the pipers three;
Fiddle-diddle, fiddle-diddle, went the fiddlers three:
And there's no a lass in a' the land,
Compared to our sweet Marjorie.

Old King Coul was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he;
Old King Coul, he had a brown bowl,
And they brought him in harpers three:
Twingle-twangle, twingle-twangle, went the harpers;
Ha-diddle, how-diddle, ha-diddle, how-diddle, went the pipers;
Fiddle-diddle, fiddle-diddle, went the fiddlers three:
And there's no a lass in a' the land,
Compared to our sweet Marjorie.

Old King Coul was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he;
Old King Coul, he had a brown bowl,
And they brought him in trumpeters three:
Twarra-rang, twarra-rang, went the trumpeters;
Twingle-twangle, twingle-twangle, went the harpers;
Ha-diddle, how-diddle, ha-diddle, how-diddle, went the pipers;
Fiddle-diddle, fiddle-diddle, went the fiddlers three:
And there's no a lass in a' Scotland,
Compared to sweet Marjorie.

Old King Coul was a jolly old soul,
And a jolly old soul was he;
Old King Coul, he had a brown bowl,
And they brought him in drummers three:
Rub-a-dub, rub-a-dub, went the drummers;
Twarra-rang, twarra-rang, went the trumpeters;
Twingle-twangle, twingle-twangle, went the harpers;
Ha-diddle, how-diddle, ha-diddle, how-diddle, went the pipers;
Fiddle-diddle, fiddle-diddle, went the fiddlers three:
And there's no a lass in a' the land,
Compared to sweet Marjorie.

POVERTY PARTS GUDE COMPANIE.

JOANNA BAILLIE.

Tune—"Todlin hame."

When white was my o'erlay as foam o' the linn,
And siller was clinkin' my pouches within;

* Crawford, the inditer of this curious frolic, was a tailor in Edinburgh, and the author of some other good songs.

When my lambkins were bleating on meadow and brae;
As I gaed to my love in new cleeding sae gay,
Kind was she,
And my friends were free;
But poverty parts gude companie.

How swift pass'd the minutes and hours of delight!
The piper play'd cheerly, the crusie burn'd bright;
And link'd in my hand was the maiden sae dear,
As she footed the floor in her holiday gear.
Woe is me,
And can it then be,
That poverty parts sic companie!

We met at the fair, we met at the kirk,
We met in the sunshine, and met in the mirk;
And the sounds of her voice, and the blinks of her een,
The cheering and life of my bosom have been.
Leaves frae the tree
At Martinmas flee;
And poverty parts sweet companie.

At bridal and infare I've braced me wi' pride;
The *bruse* I hae won, and a kiss o' the bride;
And loud was the laughter gay fellows among,
When I utter'd my banter and chorus'd my song.
Dowie to dree
Are jesting and glee,
When poverty parts gude companie.

Wherever I gaed the blythe lasses smiled sweet,
And mithers and auuties were mair than discreet,
While kebbuck and bicker were set on the board;
But now they pass by me, and never a word.
So let it be,
For the worldly and slie
Wi' poverty keep nae companie.

WILLIE WAS A WANTON WAG.

WILLIAM WALKINGSHAW OF WALKINGSHAW.

Tune—"Willie was a wanton Wag."

Willie was a wanton wag,
The blythest lad that e'er I saw:
At bridals still he bore the brag,
And carried aye the gree awa.
His doublet was of Shetland shag,
And wow but Willie he was braw;
And at his shouthers hung a tag
That pleased the lasses best of a'.

He was a man without a clag;
His heart was frank, without a flaw;
And aye whatever Willie said,
It still was hadden as a law.
His boots they were made of the jag,
When he went to the weapon-shaw;
Upon the green nane durst him brag,
The fient a ane amang them a'.

And was not Willie weel worth gowd?
He wan the love o' grit and sma';
For, after he the bride had kiss'd,
He kiss'd the lasses haill-sale a'.
Sae merrily round the ring they row'd,
When by the hand he led them a';
And smack on smack on them bestow'd,
By virtue of a standing law.

And was na Willie a great loun,
As shyre a lick as e'er was seen?
When he danced with the lasses round,
The bridegroom spier'd where he had been.
Quoth Willie, I've been at the ring;
Wi' bobbin', faith, my shanks are sair;
Gae ca' the bride and maidens in,
For Willie he dow do na mair.

Then rest ye, Willie, I'll gae out,
And for a wee fill up the ring;
But shame licht on his souple snout!
He wanted Willie's wanton fling.
Then straight he to the bride did fare,
Says, Weel's me on your bonny face!
With bobbin' Willie's shanks are sair,
And I am come to fill his place.

Bridegroom, says she, you'll spoil the dance,
And at the ring you'll aye be lag,
Unless like Willie ye advance;
Oh, Willie has a wanton leg!
For wi't he learns us a' to steer,
And foremost aye bears up the ring;
We will find nae sic dancin' here,
If we want Willie's wanton fling.*

THE AULD MAN'S MEAR'S DEAD.

Tune—"The auld man's mear's dead."

The auld man's mear's dead;
The puir body's mear's dead;
The auld man's mear's dead,
A mile aboon Dundee.

There was hay to ca', and lint to lead,
A hunder hotts o' muck to spread,
And peats and truffs and a' to lead—
And yet the jaud to dee!
The auld man's, &c.

She had the fiercie and the fleuk,
The wheezloch and the wanton yeuk;
On ilka knee she had a breuk—
What ail'd the beast to dee?
The auld man's, &c.

* From the Tea-Table Miscellany, 1724. As it is there signed by the initials of the author, there arises a presumption that he was alive, and a friend of Ramsay, at the period of the publication of that work.

She was lang-tooth'd and blench-lippit,
Heam-hough'd and haggis-fittit,
Lang-neckit, chandler-chaftit,
And yet the jaud to dee! *
The auld man's, &c.

ROY'S WIFE OF ALDIVALLOCH.

MRS. GRANT OF CARRON.

Tune—"The Ruffian's Rant."

Roy's wife of Aldivalloch,
Roy's wife of Aldivalloch,
Wat ye how she cheated me,
As I came o'er the braes of Balloch?

She vow'd, she swore, she wad be mine;
She said she lo'ed me best of onie;
But, ah! the fickle, faithless quean,
She's ta'en the earle, and left her Johnie.
Roy's wife, &c.

Oh, she was a canty quean,
And weel could dance the Highland walloch!
How happy I, had she been mine,
Or I been Roy of Aldivalloch!
Roy's wife, &c.

Her hair sae fair, her een sae clear,
Her wee bit mou' sae sweet and bonnie!
To me she ever will be dear,
Though she's for ever left her Johnie.
Roy's wife, &c.

STEER HER UP AND HAUD HER GAUN.

Tune—"Steer her up and haud her gaun."

O steer her up and haud her gaun;
Her mother's at the mill, jo:
But gin she winna tak a man,
E'en let her tak her will, jo.
Pray thee, lad, leave silly thinking;
Cast thy cares of love away;
Let's our sorrows drown in drinking;
'Tis daffin langer to delay.

See that shining glass of claret,
How invitingly it looks!
Take it aff, and let's have mair o't;
Pox on fighting, trade, and books!
Let's have pleasure, while we're able;
Bring us in the meikle bowl;
Place't on the middle of the table;
And let wind and weather gowl.

Call the drawer; let him fill it
Fou as ever it can hold:
Oh, tak tent ye dinna spill it;
'Tis mair precious far than gold.
By you've drunk a dozen bumpers,
Bacchus will begin to prove,
Spite of Venus and her mumpers,
Drinking better is than love.

SYMON BRODIE.

Tune—"Symon Brodie."

Symon Brodie had a cow,
The cow was lost, and he could na find her;
When he had done what man could do,
The cow cam hame, and her tail behind her.
Honest auld Symon Brodie,
Stupid auld doitit bodie!
I'll awa to the North countrie,
And see my ain dear Symon Brodie.

Symon Brodie had a wife,
And, wow! but she was braw and bonnie;
She took the dish-clout aff the buik,
And preen'd it to her cockernonie.
Honest auld Symon Brodie, &c.

NEIL GOW'S FAREWELL TO WHISKY.

Tune—"Farwell to Whisky."

You've surely heard o' famous Neil,
The man that played the fiddle weel;
I wat he was a canty chiel,
And dearly loe'd the whisky, O.
And, aye sin he wore the tartan trews,
He dearly lo'ed the Athole brose;
And wae was he, you may suppose,
To play farewell to whisky, O.

Alake, quoth Neil, I'm frail and auld,
And find my blude grow unco cauld;
I think 'twad make me blythe and bauld,
A wee drap Highland whiskv, O.

* The late Rev. Mr. Clunie, minister of the parish of Borthwick, near Edinburgh, (who was so enthusiastically fond of singing Scottish songs, that he used to hang his watch round the candle on Sunday evenings, and wait anxiously till the conjunction of the hands at 12 o'clock permitted him to break out in one of his favourite ditties), was noted for the admirable manner in which he sung "Bonny Dundee," "Waly, waly, up yon bank," "The Auld Man's Mear's dead," with many other old Scottish ditties. One day, happening to meet with some friends at a tavern in Dalkeith, he was solicited to favour the company with the latter humorous ditty; which he was accordingly singing with his usual effect and brilliancy, when the woman who kept the house thrust her head in at the door, and added, at the conclusion of one of the choruses, "Od, the auld man's mear's dead, sure enough. Your horse, minister, has hanged itsell at my door." Such was really the fact. The minister, on going into the house, had tied his horse by a rope to a hook, or ring, near the door, and as he was induced to stay much longer than he intended, the poor animal, either through exhaustion, or a sudden fit of disease, fell down, and was strangled. He was so much mortified by this unhappy accident, the coincidence of which with the subject of his song was not a little striking, that, all his life after, he could never be persuaded to sing "The Auld Man's Mear's dead" again.

Yet the doctors they do a' agree,
That whisky's no the drink for me.
Saul! quoth Neil, 'twill spoil my glee,
Should they part me and whisky, O.

Though I can baith get wine and ale,
And find my head and fingers hale,
I'll be content, though legs should fail,
To play farewell to whisky, O.
But still I think on auld lang syne,
When Paradise our friends did tyne,
Because something ran in their mind,
Forbid like Highland whisky, O.

Come, a' ye powers o' music, come;
I find my heart grows unco glum;
My fiddle-strings will no play bum,
To say, Fareweel to whisky, O.
Yet I'll take my fiddle in my hand,
And screw the pegs up while they'll stand,
To make a lamentation grand,
On gude auld Highland whisky, O.

THE LAMMIE.

HECTOR MACNEILL.

Tune—"Whar hae ye been a' day."

WHAR hae ye been a' day,
My boy Tammy?
I've been by burn and flow'ry brae,
Meadow green and mountain grey,
Courting o' this young thing,
Just come frae her mammy.

And whar gat ye that young thing,
My boy Tammy?
I got her down in yonder howe,
Smiling on a bonnie knowe,
Herding ae wee lamb and ewe,
For her poor mammy.

What said ye to the bonnie bairn,
My boy Tammy?
I praised her een, sae lovely blue,
Her dimpled cheek and cherry mou;—
I pree'd it aft, as ye may trow!—
She said she'd tell her mammy.

I held her to my beating heart,
My young, my smiling lammie!
I hae a house, it cost me dear,
I've wealth o' plenishen and gear;
Ye'se get it a', were't ten times mair,
Gin ye will leave your mammy.

The smile gaed aff her bonnie face—
I maunna leave my mammy.
She's gien me meat, she's gien me claise,
She's been my comfort a' my days:—
My father's death brought monie waes—
I canna leave my mammy.

We'll tak her hame and mak her fain,
My ain kind-hearted lammie.
We'll gie her meat, we'll gie her claise,
We'll be her comfort a' her days.
The wee thing gies her hand, and says—
There! gang and ask my mammy.

Has she been to the kirk wi' thee,
My boy Tammy?
She has been to the kirk wi' me,
And the tear was in her ee:
For O! she's but a young thing,
Just come frae her mammy.

THE WEE WIFIKIE.

DR. A. GEDDES.

Tune—"The wee bit Wifikie."

THERE was a wee bit wifikie was comin' frae the fair,
Had got a wee bit drappikie, that bred her muckle care;
It gaed about the wifie's heart, and she began to spew:
O! quo' the wifikie, I wish I binna fou.
I wish I binna fou, I wish I binna fou,
O! quo' the wifikie, I wish I binna fou.

If Johnnie find me barley-sick, I'm sure he'll claw my skin;
But I'll lie doun and tak a nap before that I gae in.
Sittin' at the dyke-side, and takin' o' her nap,
By cam a packman laddie, wi' a little pack.
Wi' a little pack, quo she, wi' a little pack,
By cam a packman laddie, wi' a little pack.

He's clippit a' her gowden locks, sae bonnie and sae lang;
He's ta'en her purse and a' her placks, and fast awa he ran:
And when the wifie wakened, her head was like a bee,
Oh! quo' the wifikie, this is nae me.
This is nae me, quo' she, this is nae me;
Somebody has been fellin' me, and this is nae me.

I met wi' kindly company, and birl'd my bawbee!
And still, if this be Bessikie, three placks remain wi' me:
And I will look the pursie neuks, see gin the cunyie be;—
There's neither purse nor plack about me!
This is nae me,
This is nae me, &c.

I have a little housikie, but and a kindly man.
A dog, they ca' him Doussikie; if this be me, he'll fawn;

And Johnnie he'll come to the door, and kindly welcome gie,
And a' the bairns on the floor-head will dance, if this be me.
Will dance, if this be me, &c.

The nicht was late, and dang out weet, and, oh, but it was dark;
The doggie heard a body's fit, and he began to bark:
O, when she heard the doggie bark, and kennin' it was he,
O, weel ken ye, Doussiekie, quo she, this is nae me.
This is nae me, &c.

When Johnnie heard his Bessie's word, fast to the door he ran:
Is that you, Bessikie?—Wow, na, man!
Be kind to the bairns a', and weil mat ye be;
And fareweel, Johnnie, quo' she, this is nae me.
This is nae me, &c.

John ran to the minister; his hair stood a' on end:
I've gotten sic a fright, Sir, I fear I'll never mend;
My wife's come hame without a head, crying out most piteouslie:
Oh, fareweel, Johnnie, quo' she, this is nae me!
This is nae me, &c.

The tale you tell, the parson said, is wonderful to me,
How that a wife without a head should speak, or hear, or see!
But things that happen hereabout so strangely alter'd be,
That I could maist wi' Bessie say, 'Tis neither you nor she!*
Neither you nor she, quo' he, neither you nor she;
Wow, na, Johnnie man, 'tis neither you nor she.

Now Johnnie he cam hame again, and wow, but he was fain,
To see his little Bessikie come to hersell again.
He got her sittin' on a stool, wi' Tibbock on her knee:
O come awa, Johnnie, quo' she, come awa to me;
For I've got a drap wi' Tibbikie, and this is now me.
This is now me, quo' she, this is now me;
I've got a drap wi' Tibbikie, and this is now me.

* A Jacobite allusion, probably to the change of the Stuart for the Brunswick dynasty, in 1714.

FAREWELL TO AYRSHIRE.

GALL.

Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Scenes that former thoughts renew,
Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Now a sad and last adieu!

Bonny Doon, sae sweet and gloamin,
Fare thee weel before I gang!
Bonny Doon, whare, early roaming,
First I weav'd the *rustic sang!*

Bowers, adieu, whare Love, decoying,
First inthrall'd this heart o' mine,
There the saftest sweets enjoying,—
Sweets that Mem'ry ne'er shall tyne!

Friends, so near my bosom ever,
Ye hae rendered moment's dear;
But, alas! when forc'd to sever,
Then the stroke, O, how severe!

Friends! that parting tear reserve it,
Tho' 'tis doubly dear to me!
Could I think I did deserve it,
How much happier would I be!

Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Scenes that former thoughts renew,
Scenes of woe and scenes of pleasure,
Now a sad and last adieu!

TIBBIE FOWLER.*

Tune—"Tibbie Fowler."

Tibbie Fowler o' the Glen,
There's ower mony wooing at her;
Tibbie Fowler o' the Glen,
There's ower mony wooing at her.
Wooin' at her, pu'in' at her,
Courtin' her, and canna get her;
Filthy elf, it's for her pelf
That a' the lads are wooing at her.

Ten cam east, and ten cam west;
Ten cam rowin' ower the water;

* Said to have been written by the Rev. Dr. Strachan, late minister of Carnwath, although certainly grounded upon a song of older standing, the name of which is mentioned in the Tea-Table Miscellany. The two first verses of the song appeared in Herd's Collection, 1776.

There is a tradition at Leith that Tibbie Fowler was a real person, and married, some time during the seventeenth century, to the representative of the attainted family of Logan of Restalrig, whose town-house, dated 1636, is still pointed out at the head of a street in Leith, called the Sheriff-brae. The marriage-contract between Logan and Isabella Fowler is still extant, in the possession of a gentleman resident at Leith.—*See Campbell's History of Leith, note,* p. 314.

Twa cam down the lang dyke-side:
There's twa-and-thirty wooin' at her.
Wooin' at her, &c.

There's seven but, and seven ben,
Seven in the pantry wi' her;
Twenty head about the door:
There's ane-and-forty wooin' at her.
Wooin' at her, &c.

She's got pendles in her lugs;
Cockle-shells wad set her better!
High-heel'd shoon, and siller tags;
And a' the lads are wooin' at her.
Wooin' at her, &c.

Be a lassie e'er sae black,
Gin she hae the penny siller,
Set her up on Tintock tap,
The wind will blaw a man till her.
Wooin' at her, &c.

Be a lassie e'er sae fair,
An she want the penny siller,
A flie may fell her in the air,
Before a man be even'd till her.
Wooin' at her, &c.

ANNIE LAURIE. *

Maxwelton banks are bonnie,
Where early fa's the dew;
Where me and Annie Laurie
Made up the promise true;
Made up the promise true,
And never forget will I;
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'll lay me doun and die.

She's backit like the peacock;
She's breistit like the swan;
She's jimp about the middle;
Her waist ye weel micht span:
Her waist ye well micht span,
And she has a rolling eye;
And for bonnie Annie Laurie
I'll lay me doun and die.

* These two verses, which are in a style wonderfully tender and chaste for their age, were written by a Mr. Douglas of Fingland, upon Anne, one of the four daughters of Sir Robert Laurie, first Baronet of Maxwelton, by his second wife, who was a daughter of Riddell of Minto. As Sir Robert was created a baronet in the year 1685, it is probable that the verses were composed about the end of the seventeenth or the beginning of the eighteenth century. It is painful to record, that, notwithstanding the ardent and chivalrous affection displayed by Mr. Douglas in his poem, he did not obtain the heroine for a wife: She was married to Mr. Ferguson of Craigdarroch.—See "*A Ballad Book*," (*printed at Edinburgh in* 1824), p. 107.

THE BRISK YOUNG LAD.

Tune—"Bung your eye in the morning."

There cam a young man to my daddie's door,
My daddie's door, my daddie's door;
There cam a young man to my daddie's door,
Cam seeking me to woo.
And wow! but he was a braw young lad,
A brisk young lad, and a braw young lad;
And wow! but he was a braw young lad,
Cam seeking me to woo.

But I was baking when he came,
When he came, when he came;
I took him in and gied him a scone,
To thowe his frozen mou.
And wow! but he was, &c.

I set him in aside the bink;
I gae him bread and ale to drink;
And ne'er a blythe styme wad he blink,
Until his wame was fou.
And wow! but he was, &c.

Gae, get you gone, you cauldrife wooer,
Ye sour-looking, cauldrife wooer!
I straightway show'd him to the door,
Saying, Come nae mair to woo.
And wow! but he was, &c.

There lay a deuk-dub before the door,
Before the door, before the door;
There lay a deuk-dub before the door,
And there fell he, I trow!
And wow! but he was, &c.

Out cam the guidman, and high he shouted;
Out cam the guidwife, and laigh she louted;
And a' the toun-neebors were gather'd about it;
And there lay he, I trow!
And wow! but he was, &c.

Then out cam I, and sneer'd and smiled;
Ye cam to woo, but ye're a' beguiled;
Ye've fa'en i' the dirt, and ye're a' befyled;
We'll hae nae mair o' you!
And wow! but he was, &c.

KIND ROBIN LO'ES ME.

Tune—"Robin lo'es me."

Robin is my only jo,
For Robin has the art to lo'e;
Sae to his suit I mean to bow,
Because I ken he lo'es me.
Happy, happy was the shower,
That led me to his birken bower,
Where first of love I fand the power,
And kenn'd that Robin lo'ed me.

They speak of napkins, speak of rings,
Speak of gluves and kissin' strings;

And name a thousand bonnie things,
And ca' them signs he lo'es me.
But I'd prefer a smack o' Rob,
Seated on the velvet fog,
To gifts as lang's a plaiden wab;
Because I ken he lo'es me.

He's tall and sonsie, frank and free,
Lo'ed by a', and dear to me;
Wi' him I'd live, wi' him I'd dee,
Because my Robin lo'es me.
My tittie Mary said to me,
Our courtship but a joke wad be,
And I or lang be made to see
That Robin didna lo'e me.

But little kens she what has been,
Me and my honest Rob between;
And in his wooing, O sae keen
Kind Robin is that lo'es me.
Then fly, ye lazy hours, away,
And hasten on the happy day,
When, Join your hands, Mess John will say,
And mak him mine that lo'es me.

Till then, let every chance unite
To fix our love and give delight,
And I'll look down on such wi' spite,
Wha doubt that Robin lo'es me.
O hey, Robin! quo' she,
O hey, Robin! quo' she,
O hey, Robin! quo' she;
Kind Robin lo'es me.

THE POETS, WHAT FOOLS THEY'RE TO DEAVE US.

ROBERT GILFILLAN.

Tune—"Fy, let us a' to the bridal."

The poets, what fools they're to deave us,
How ilka ane's lassie's sae fine;
The tane is an angel—and, save us!
The neist ane you meet wi's divine!
And then there's a lang-nebbit sonnet,
Be't Katie, or Janet, or Jean;
And the moon, or some far-awa planet's
Compared to the blink o' her een.

The earth an' the sea they've ransackit
For sim'lies to set off their charms;
And no a wee flow'r but's attackit
By poets, like bumbees, in swarms.
Now, what signifies a' this clatter,
By chiels that the truth winna tell?
Wad it no be settlin' the matter,
To say, Lass, ye're just like your sell?

An' then there's nae end to the evil,
For they are no deaf to the din—
That like me ony puir luckless deevil
Daur scarce look the gate they are in!
But e'en let them be, wi' their scornin':
There's a lassie whase name I could tell;
Her smile is as sweet as the mornin'—
But whisht! I am ravin' mysell.

But he that o' ravin's convickit,
When a bonnie sweet lass he thinks on,
May he ne'er get anither strait jacket
Than that buckled to by Mess John!
An' he wha—though cautious an' canny—
The charms o' the fair never saw,
Though wise as King Solomon's grannie,
I swear is the daftest of a'.

'TWAS WITHIN A MILE OF EDINBURGH TOWN.

Tune—"Within a mile of Edinburgh."

'Twas within a mile of Edinburgh town,
In the rosy time of the year;
Sweet flowers bloom'd, and the grass was down,
And each shepherd woo'd his dear.
Bonny Jockey, blythe and gay,
Kiss'd sweet Jenny, making hay,
The lassie blush'd, and frowning, cried, "No, no, it will not do;
I cannot, cannot, wonnot, wonnot, mannot buckle too."

Jockey was a wag that never would wed,
Though long he had followed the lass;
Contented she earned and eat her own bread,
And merrily turn'd up the grass.
Bonny Jockey, blythe and free,
Won her heart right merrily:
Yet still she blush'd, and frowning, cried, "No, no, it will not do;
I cannot, cannot, wonnot, wonnot, mannot buckle too."

But when he vow'd he would make her his bride,
Though his flocks and herds were not few,
She gave him her hand, and a kiss beside,
And vow'd she'd for ever be true.
Bonny Jockey, blythe and free,
Won her heart right merrily:
At church she no more frowning, cried, "No, no, it will not do;
I cannot, cannot, wonnot, wonnot, mannot buckle too."

MY LUVE'S IN GERMANIE.

Tune—"My luve's in Germanie."

My luve's in Germanie;
Send him hame, send him hame;
My luve's in Germanie;
Send him hame.

My luve's in Germanie,
Fighting brave for royalty;
He may ne'er his Jeanie see;
  Send him hame, send him hame;
He may ne'er his Jeanie see;
  Send him hame.

He's as brave as brave can be;
  Send him hame, send him hame;
Our faes are ten to three;
  Send him hame.
Our faes are ten to three;
He maun either fa' or flee,
In the cause of loyalty;
  Send him hame, send him hame;
In the cause of loyalty;
  Send him hame.

Your luve ne'er learnt to flee,
  Bonnie dame, winsome dame;
Your luve ne'er learnt to flee,
  Winsome dame.
Your luve ne'er learnt to flee,
But he fell in Germanie,
Fighting brave for loyalty,
  Mournfu' dame, mournfu' dame;
Fighting brave for loyalty,
  Mournfu' dame.

He'll ne'er come ower the sea;
  Willie's slain, Willie's slain;
He'll ne'er come ower the sea;
  Willie's gane!
He will ne'er come ower the sea,
To his luve and ain countrie.
This warld's nae mair for me;
  Willie's gane, Willie's gane;
This warld's nae mair for me;
  Willie's gane!

TO THE KYE WI' ME.

O was na' she worthy o' kisses,
  Far mae than twa or three,
And worthy o' bridal blisses,
  Wha gaed to the kye wi' me.
    O gang to the kye wi' me, my love,
      Gang to the kye wi' me,
    Ower the burn and through the broom,
      And I'll be merry wi' thee.

I hae a house a biggin,
  Anither that's like to fa',
And I love a scornfu' lassie,
  Wha grieves me warst of a'.
    O gang to the kye wi' me, my love,
      O gang to the kye wi' me.
    Ye'll think nae mair o' your mither
      Amang the broom wi' me.

I hae a house a biggin,
  Anither that's like to fa',
I hae noo the lassie wi' bairn,
  Which vexes me warst of a'.
    O gang to the kye wi' me, my love,
      Gang to the kye wi' me,
    I hae an auld mither at hame,
      Will doodle it on her knee.

THE MILLER O' DEE.

Tune—"The Miller of Dee."

There was a jolly miller once
  Lived on the river Dee;
He wrought and sung from morn till night,
  No lark more blythe than he.
And this the burden of his song
  For ever used to be;
I care for nobody, no, not I,
  If nobody cares for me.
    And this, &c.

When spring began its merry career,
  O, then his heart was gay;
He feared not summer's sultry heat,
  Nor winter's cold decay.
No foresight marred the miller's cheer,
  Who oft did sing and say,
Let others live from year to year,
  I'll live from day to day.
    No foresight, &c.

Then, like this miller, bold and free,
  Let us be glad and sing;
The days of youth are made for glee,
  And life is on the wing.
The song shall pass from me to you,
  Around this jovial ring.
Let heart, and hand, and voice agree:
  And so, God save our king.*
    The song, &c.

SAW YE MY FATHER?

Tune—"Saw ye my father?"

"O saw ye my father, or saw ye my mother,
  Or saw ye my true love John?"
"I saw not your father, I saw not your mother,
  But I saw your true love John."

"It's now ten at night, and the stars gie nae light,
  And the bells they ring ding dong;
He's met with some delay, that causeth him to stay;
  But he will be here ere long."

The surly auld carle did naething but snarle,
  And Jonnie's face it grew red;

* From an old MS. copy. The song seems to have been first printed in Herd's Collection, 1776.

Yet, though he often sighed, he ne'er a word replied,
Till all were asleep in bed.

Up Johnie rose, and to the door he goes,
And gently tirled at the pin.
The lassie, taking tent, unto the door she went,
And she opened and let him in.

"And are ye come at last, and do I hold ye fast?
And is my Johnie true?"
"I have nae time to tell, but sae lang's I like mysell,
Sae lang sall I love you."

"Flee up, flee up, my bonnie grey cock,
And craw whan it is day:
Your neck shall be like the bonnie beaten gowd,
And your wings of the silver grey."

The cock proved fause, and untrue he was;
For he crew an hour ower sune.
The lassie thought it day, when she sent her love away,
And it was but a blink o' the mune.

TAM O' THE BALLOCH.

H. AINSLEY.

Tune—"The Campbells are coming.

In the Nick o' the Balloch lived Muirland Tam,
Weel stentit wi' brochan and braxie-ham;
A breist like a buird, and a back like a door,
And a wapping wame that hung down afore.

But what's come ower ye, Muirland Tam?
For your leg's now grown like a wheel-barrow tram;
Your ee it's faun in—your nose it's faun out,
And the skin o' your cheek's like a dirty clout.

O ance, like a yaud, ye spankit the bent,
Wi' a fecket sae fou, and a stocking sae stent,
The strength o' a stot—the wecht o' a cow;
Now, Tammy, my man, ye're grown like a grew.

I mind sin' the blink o' a canty quean
Could watered your mou and lichtit your een;
Now ye leuk like a yowe, when ye should be a ram;
O what can be wrang wi' ye, Muirland Tam?

Has some dowg o' the yirth set your gear abreed?
Hae they broken your heart or broken your head?
Hae they rackit wi' rungs or kittled wi' steel?
Or, Tammy, my man, hae ye seen the deil?

Wha ance was your match at a stoup and a tale?
Wi' a voice like a sea, and a drouth like a whale?
Now ye peep like a powt; ye glumph and ye gaunt;
Oh, Tammy, my man, are ye turned a saunt?

Come, lowse your heart, ye man o' the muir;
We tell our distress ere we look for a cure:
There's laws for a wrang, and sa's for a sair;
Sae, Tammy, my man, what wad ye hae mair?

Oh! neebour, it neither was thresher nor thief,
That deepened my ee, and lichtened my beef;
But the word that makes me sae waefu' and wan,
Is—Tam o' the Balloch's a married man!

HAUD AWA FRAE ME DONALD.

Haud awa, bide awa!
Haud awa frae me, Donald:
I've seen the man I well could love,
But that was never thee, Donald.
Wi' plumed bonnet waiving proud,
And claymore by thy knee, Donald,
And Lord o' Moray's mountains high,
Thou'rt no a match for me, Donald.

Haud awa, bide awa,
Haud awa frae me, Donald,
What sairs your mountains and your lochs,
I canna swim nor flee Donald:
But if ye'll come when yon fair sun
Is sunk beneath the sea, Donald,
I'll quit my kin, and kilt my cots,
And take the hills wi' thee, Donald.

One of the old verses runs thus:—

Haud awa, bide awa,
Haud awa frae me, Donald,
Keep awa your cauld hand
Frae my warm knee Donald.

AULD ROB MORRIS.

Tune—"Auld Rob Morris."

MOTHER.

Auld Rob Morris, that wons in yon glen,
He's the king o' guid fallows, and wale o' auld men;
He has fourscore o' black sheep, and fourscore too;
Auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun lo'e.

DAUGHTER.

Haud your tongue, mother, and let that abee;
For his eild and my eild can never agree:
They'll never agree, and that will be seen;
For he is fourscore, and I'm but fifteen.

MOTHER.

Haud your tongue, dochter, and lay by your pride,
For he is the bridegroom, and ye'se be the bride ;
He shall lie by your side, and kiss you too ;
Auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun lo'e.

DAUGHTER.

Auld Rob Morris, I ken him fu' weel,
His back sticks out like ony peat-creel ;
He's out-shinn'd, in-kneed, and ringle-eyed too ;
Auld Rob Morris is the man I'll ne'er lo'e.

MOTHER.

Though auld Rob Morris be an elderly man,
Yet his auld brass will buy you a new pan ;
Then, dochter, ye should na be sa ill to shoe,
For auld Rob Morris is the man ye maun lo'e.

DAUGHTER.

But auld Rob Morris I never will hae,
His back is so stiff, and his beard is grown grey ;
I had rather die than live wi' him a year ;
Sae mair o' Rob Morris I never will hear.

THE MALT-MAN.

The malt-man comes on Munday,
He craves wonder sair,
Cries, Dame, come gi'e me my siller,
Or malt ye sall ne'er get mair.
I took him into the pantry,
And gave him some good cock-broo,
Syne paid him upon a gantree,
As hostler-wives should do.

When malt-men come for siller,
And gaugers with wands o'er soon,
Wives, tak them a' down to the cellar,
And clear them as I have done.
This bewith, when cunzie is scanty,
Will keep them frae making din ;
The knack I learn'd frae an auld aunty,
The snackest of a' my kin.

The malt-man is right cunning,
But I can be as slee,
And he may crack of his winning,
When he clears scores with me :
For come when he likes, I'm ready ;
But if frae hame I be,
Let him wait on our kind lady,
She'll answer a bill for me.

THE AULD WIFE BEYONT THE FIRE.

There was a wife won'd in a glen,
And she had dochters nine or ten,
That sought the house baith but and ben,
To find their mam a snishing.

The auld wife beyont the fire,
The auld wife aniest the fire,
The auld wife aboon the fire,
*She died for lack of snishing.**

Her mill into some hole had fawn,
Whatrecks, quoth she, let it be gawn,
For I maun hae a young goodman
Shall furnish me with snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

Her eldest dochter said right bauld,
Fy, mother, mind that now ye're auld,
And if ye with a younker wald,
He'll waste away your snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

The youngest dochter ga'e a shout,
O mother dear ! your teeth's a' out,
Besides ha'f blind, you have the gout,
Your mill can had nae snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

Ye lied, ye limmers, cries auld mump,
For I hae baith a tooth and stump,
And will nae langer live in dump,
By wanting of my snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

Thole ye, says Peg, that pawky slut,
Mother, if ye can crack a nut,
Then we will a' consent to it,
That you shall have a snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

The auld ane did agree to that,
And they a pistol-bullet gat ;
She powerfully began to crack,
To win hersell a snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

Braw sport it was to see her chow't,
And 'tween her gums sae squeeze and row't,
While frae her jaws the slaver flow'd,
And ay she curs'd poor stumpy.
The auld wife, &c.

At last she ga'e a desperate squeez,
Which brak the lang tooth by the neez,
And syne poor stumpy was at ease,
But she tint hopes of snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

She of the task began to tire,
And frae her dochters did retire,
Syne lean'd her down ayont the fire,
And died for lack of snishing.
The auld wife, &c.

Ye auld wives, notice well this truth,
Assoon as ye're past mark of mouth,

* Snishing, in its literal meaning, is snuff made of tobacco ; but, in this song, it means sometimes contentment, a husband, love, money, &c.

Ne'er do what's only fit for youth,
And leave aff thoughts of snishing :
Else, like this wife beyont the fire,
Ye'r bairns against you will conspire ;
Nor will ye get, unless ye hire,
A young man with your snishing.

BESSY BELL AND MARY GRAY.

O BESSY Bell and Mary Gray,
They are twa bonny lassies,
They bigg'd a bow'r on yon burn-brae,
And theek'd it o'er wi' rashes.
Fair Bessy Bell I loo'd yestreen,
And thought I ne'er could alter ;
But Mary Gray's twa pawky een,
They gar my fancy falter.

Now Bessy's hair's like a lint tap ;
She smiles like a May morning,
When Phœbus starts frae Thetis' lap,
The hills with rays adorning :
White is her neck, saft is her hand,
Her waist and feet's fu' genty ;
With ilka grace she can command ;
Her lips, O wow ! they're dainty.

And Mary's locks are like a craw,
Her een like diamonds glances ;
She's ay sae clean, redd up, and braw,
She kills whene'er she dances :
Blythe as a kid, with wit at will,
She blooming, tight, and tall is ;
And guides her airs sae gracefu' still.
O Jove, she's like thy Pallas.

Dear Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,
Ye unco sair oppress us ;
Our fancies jee between you twa,
Ye are sic bonny lassies :
Wae's me ! for baith I canna get,
To ane by law we're stented ;
Then I'll draw cuts, and take my fate,
And be with ane contented.

BONNY BARBARA ALLAN.

IT was in and about the Martinmas time,
When the green leaves were a-falling,
That Sir John Græme in the west country
Fell in love with Barbara Allan.

He sent his man down through the town,
To the place where she was dwelling,
O haste, and come to my master dear,
Gin ye be Barbara Allan.

O hooly, hooly rose she up,
To the place where he was lying,
And when she drew the curtain by,
Young man, I think you're dying

O its I'm sick, and very very sick,
And 'tis a' for Barbara Allan.
O the better for me ye's never be,
Tho' your heart's blood were a-spilling.

O dinna ye mind, young man, said she,
When he was in the tavern a-drinking,
That ye made the healths gae round and round,
And slighted Barbara Allan ?

He turn'd his face unto the wall,
And death was with him dealing ;
Adieu, adieu, my dear friends all,
And be kind to Barbara Allan.

And slowly, slowly raise she up,
And slowly, slowly left him ;
And sighing, said, she cou'd not stay,
Since death of life had reft him.

She had not gane a mile but twa,
When she heard the dead-bell ringing,
And every jow that the dead-bell gied,
It cry'd, Wo to Barbara Allan.

O mother, mother, make my bed,
O make it saft and narrow,
Since my love dy'd for me to-day,
I'll die for him to-morrow.

ETTRICK BANKS.

ON Ettrick banks, in a summer's night,
At glowming when the sheep drave hame ;
I met my lassie braw and tight,
Came wading, barefoot, a' her lane :
My heart grew light, I ran, I flang
My arms about her lily neck,
And kiss'd and clapp'd her there fou lang ;
My words they were na mony, feck.

I said, my lassie, will ye go
To the highland hills, the Earse to learn ?
I'd baith gi'e thee a cow and ew,
When ye come to the brigg of Earn.
At Leith, auld meal comes in, ne'er fash,
And herrings at the Broomy Law ;
Chear up your heart, my bonny lass,
There's gear to win we never saw.

All day when we have wrought enough,
When winter, frosts, and snaw begin,
Soon as the sun gaes west the loch,
At night when you sit down to spin,
I'll screw my pipes and play a spring :
And thus the weary night will end,
Till the tender kid and lamb-time bring
Our pleasant summer back again.

Syne when the trees are in their bloom,
And gowans glent o'er ilka field,
I'll meet my lass among the broom,
And lead you to my summer-shield.
Then far frae a' their scornfu' din,
That make the kindly hearts their sport,
We'll laugh and kiss, and dance and sing,
And gar the langest day seem short.

THE BIRKS OF INVERMAY.*

DAVID MALLET.

Tune—"The Birks of Invermay."

The smiling morn, the breathing spring,
Invite the tunefu' birds to sing;
And, while they warble from the spray,
Love melts the universal lay.
Let us, Amanda, timely wise,
Like them, improve the hour that flies;
And in soft raptures waste the day,
Among the birks of Invermay.

For soon the winter of the year,
And age, life's winter, will appear;
At this thy living bloom will fade,
As that will strip the verdant shade.
Our taste of pleasure then is o'er,
The feather'd songsters are no more;
And when they drop, and we decay,
Adieu the birks of Invermay!

THE BRAES O' BALLENDEAN.

DR. BLACKLOCK.

Tune—"The Braes o' Ballendean."

Beneath a green shade, a lovely young swain
Ae evening reclined, to discover his pain;
So sad, yet so sweetly, he warbled his woe,
The winds ceased to breathe, and the fountain to flow;
Rude winds wi' compassion could hear him complain,
Yet Chloe, less gentle, was deaf to his strain.

How happy, he cried, my moments once flew,
Ere Chloe's bright charms first flash'd in my view!
Those eyes then wi' pleasure the dawn could survey;
Nor smiled the fair morning mair cheerful than they.
Now scenes of distress please only my sight;
I'm tortured in pleasure, and languish in light.

Through changes in vain relief I pursue,
All, all but conspire my griefs to renew;
From sunshine to zephyrs and shades we repair—
To sunshine we fly from too piercing an air;
But love's ardent fire burns always the same,
No winter can cool it, no summer inflame.

But see the pale moon, all clouded, retires;
The breezes grow cool, not Strephon's desires:
I fly from the dangers of tempest and wind,
Yet nourish the madness that preys on my mind.
Ah, wretch! how can life be worthy thy care?
To lengthen its moments, but lengthens despair.*

THE BRUME O' THE COWDENKNOWES.

Tune—"The Brume o' the Cowdenknowes."

How blyth, ilk morn, was I to see
My swain come ower the hill!
He skipt the burn and flew to me:
I met him with good will.
Oh, the brume, the bonnie, bonnie brume!
The brume o' the Cowdenknowes!
I wish I were with my dear swain,
With his pipe and my yowes.

I wanted neither yowe nor lamb,
While his flock near me lay;
He gather'd in my sheep at night,
And cheer'd me a' the day.
Oh, the brume, &c.

He tuned his pipe, and play'd sae sweet,
The birds sat listening bye;
E'en the dull cattle stood and gazed,
Charm'd with the melodye.
Oh, the brume, &c.

While thus we spent our time, by turns,
Betwixt our flocks and play,
I envied not the fairest dame,
Though e'er so rich or gay.
Oh, the brume, &c.

* Invermay is a small woody glen, watered by the rivulet May, which there joins the river Earn. It is about five miles above the bridge of Earn, and nearly nine from Perth. The seat of Mr. Belsches, the proprietor of this poetical region, and who takes from it his territorial designation, stands at the bottom of the glen. Both sides of the little vale are completely wooded, chiefly with birches; and it is altogether, in point of natural loveliness, a scene worthy of the attention of the amatory muse. The course of the May is so sunk among rocks, that it cannot be seen, but it can easily be traced in its progress by another sense. The peculiar sound which it makes in rushing through one particular part of its narrow, rugged, and tortuous channel, has occasioned the descriptive appellation of the *Humble-Bumble* to be attached to that quarter of the vale. Invermay may be at once and correctly described as the fairest possible little miniature specimen of cascade scenery.

The song appeared in the 4th volume of the Tea-Table Miscellany.

* The celebrated Tenducci used to sing this song, with great effect, in St. Cecilia's Hall, at Edinburgh, about fifty years ago. Mr. Tytler, who was a great patron of that obsolete place of amusement, says, in his Dissertation on Scottish Music, "Who could hear with insensibility, or without being moved in the highest degree, Tenducci sing, 'I'll never leave thee,' or, 'The Braes o' Ballendean.' The air was composed by Oswald.

Hard fate, that I should banish'd be,
Gang heavily, and mourn,
Because I loved the kindest swain
That ever yet was born.
Oh, the brume, &c.

He did oblige me every hour;
Could I but faithful be?
He stawe my heart; could I refuse
Whate'er he ask'd of me?
Oh, the brume, &c.

My doggie, and my little kit
That held my wee soup whey,
My plaidie, brooch, and crookit stick,
May now lie useless by.
Oh, the brume, &c.

Adieu, ye Cowdenknowes, adieu!
Fareweel, a' pleasures there!
Ye gods, restore me to my swain—
Is a' I crave or care.
*Oh, the brume, &c.**

THE CARLE HE CAM OWER THE CRAFT.

Tune—"The Carle he cam ower the Craft."

The carle he cam ower the craft,
Wi' his beard new-shaven;
He looked at me as he'd been daft,—
The carle trowed that I wad hae him.
Hout awa! I winna hae him!
Na, forsooth, I winna hae him!
For a' his beard new-shaven,
Ne'er a bit o' me will hae him.

A siller brooch he gae me neist,
To fasten on my curchie nookit;
I wore 't a wee upon my breist,
But soon, alake! the tongue o't crookit;
And sae may his; I winna hae him!
Na, forsooth, I winna hae him!
Twice-a-bairn's a lassie's jest;
Sae ony fool for me may hae him.

The carle has nae fault but ane;
For he has land and dollars plenty;
But, wae's me for him, skin and bane
Is no for a plump lass of twenty.
Hout awa, I winna hae him!
Na, forsooth, I winna hae him!
What signifies his dirty riggs,
And cash, without a man wi' them?
But should my cankert daddie gar
Me tak him 'gainst my inclination,
I warn the fumbler to beware
That antlers dinna claim their station.
Hout awa! I winna hae him!
Na, forsooth, I winna hae him!
I'm flee'd to crack the haly band,
Sae lawty says, I shou'd na hae him.

THE WEE THING.

MACNEIL.

Tune—"Bonnie Dundee."

Saw ye my wee thing? saw ye my ain thing?
Saw ye my true love down on yon lea?
Cross'd she the meadow yestreen at the gloamin'?
Sought she the burnie whar flow'rs the hawtree?

Her hair it is lint-white; her skin it is milk-white;
Dark is the blue o' her saft-rolling ee;
Red red her ripe lips, and sweeter than roses:
Whar could my wee thing wander frae me?—

I saw nae your wee thing, I saw nae your ain thing,
Nor saw I your true love down on yon lea;
But I met my bonnie thing late in the gloamin,
Down by the burnie whar flow'rs the hawtree.

Her hair it was lint-white; her skin it was milk-white;
Dark was the blue o' her saft-rolling ee;
Red were her ripe lips, and sweeter than roses;
Sweet were the kisses that she gae to me!—

It was na my wee thing, it was na my ain thing,
It was na my true love ye met by the tree:
Proud is her leal heart! and modest her nature!
She never loed onie till ance she loed me.

Her name it is Mary; she's frae Castle-Cary;
Aft has she sat, when a bairn, on my knee:
Fair as your face is, war't fifty times fairer,
Young bragger, she ne'er would gie kisses to thee!—

It was, then, your Mary; she's frae Castle-Cary;
It was, then, your true love I met by the tree:
Proud as her heart is, and modest her nature,
Sweet were the kisses that she gae to me.—

Sair gloom'd his dark brow—blood-red his cheek grew—
Wild flash'd the fire frae his red-rolling ee!

* As the reader may be supposed anxious to know something of the place which has thus been the subject of so much poetry, the editor thinks it proper to inform him, that, "the Cowdenknowes," or, as sometimes spelled in old writings, the Coldingknowes, are two little hills on the east side of the vale of Lauderdale, Berwickshire. They lie immediately to the south of the village of Earlston, celebrated as the residence of the earliest known Scottish poet, Thomas the Rhymer.

Ye'se rue sair, this morning, your boasts and your scorning:
Defend ye, fause traitor! for loudly ye lie.—

Awa wi' beguiling! cried the youth, smiling:
Aff went the bonnet; the lint-white locks flee;
The belted plaid fa'ing, her white bosom shawing—
Fair stood the loved maid wi' the dark-rolling ee!

Is it my wee thing! is it mine ain thing!
Is it my true love here that I see!—
O Jamie, forgie me; your heart's constant to me;
I'll never mair wander, dear laddie, frae thee!

THE WHITE COCKADE.

Tune—"The White Cockade."

My love was born in Aberdeen,
The bonniest lad that e'er was seen;
But now he makes our hearts fu' sad—
He's ta'en the field wi' his white cockade.
O, he's a ranting roving blade!
O, he's a brisk and a bonny lad!
Betide what may, my heart is glad
To see my lad wi' his white cockade.

O, leeze me on the philabeg,
The hairy hough, and garter'd leg!
But aye the thing that glads my ee,
Is the white cockade aboon the bree.
O, he's a ranting, &c.

I'll sell my rock, I'll sell my reel,
My rippling kame, and spinning wheel,
To buy my lad a tartan plaid,
A braidsword and a white cockade.
O, he's a ranting, &c.

I'll sell my rokely and my tow,
My gude grey mare and hawket cow,
That every loyal Buchan lad
May tak the field wi' his white cockade.
O, he's a ranting, &c.

THE WIDOW.

ALLAN RAMSAY.

The widow can bake, and the widow can brew,
The widow can shape, and the widow can sew,
And mony braw things the widow can do;
Then have at the widow, my laddie.
With courage attack her, baith early and late:
To kiss her and clap her ye maunna be blate:
Speak well, and do better; for that's the best gate
To win a young widow, my laddie.

The widow she's youthfu', and never ae hair
The waur of the wearing, and has a good skair
Of every thing lovely; she's witty and fair,
And has a rich jointure, my laddie.
What could ye wish better, your pleasure to crown,
Than a widow, the bonniest toast in the town,
With, Naething but—draw in your stool and sit down,
And sport with the widow, my laddie.

Then till her, and kill her with courtesie dead,
Though stark love and kindness be all you can plead;
Be heartsome and airy, and hope to succeed
With the bonnie gay widow, my laddie.
Strike iron while 'tis het, if ye'd have it to wald;
For fortune ay favours the active and bauld,
But ruins the wooer that's thowless and cauld,
Unfit for the widow, my laddie.

THE YELLOW-HAIR'D LADDIE.

OLD VERSES.

Tune—"The yellow-hair'd Laddie."

The yellow-hair'd laddie sat down on yon brae,
Cried, Milk the yowes, lassie, let nane o' them gae;
And aye as she milkit, she merrily sang,
The yellow-hair'd laddie shall be my gudeman.
And aye as she milkit, she merrily sang,
The yellow-hair'd laddie shall be my gudeman.

The weather is cauld, and my cleadin is thin,
The yowes are new clipt, and they winna bucht in;
They winna bucht in, although I should dee:
Oh, yellow-haird'd laddie, be kind unto me.
And aye as she milkit, &c.

The gudewife cries butt the house, Jennie, come ben;
The cheese is to mak, and the butter's to kirn.
Though butter, and cheese, and a' should gang sour,
I'll crack and I'll kiss wi' my love ae half hour.
It's ae lang half hour, and we'll e'en mak it three,
*For the yellow-hair'd laddie my gudeman shall be.**

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* From the Tea-Table Miscellany, 1724.

THE YOUNG LAIRD AND EDINBURGH KATIE.

RAMSAY.

Tune—"Tartan Screen."

Now wat ye wha I met yestreen,
Coming down the street, my joe?
My mistress, in her tartan screen,
Fu' bonnie, braw, and sweet, my joe!
My dear, quoth I, thanks to the nicht
That never wiss'd a lover ill,
Sin' ye're out o' your mither's sicht,
Let's tak' a walk up to the hill.*

Oh, Katie, wilt thou gang wi' me,
And leave the dinsome toun a while?
The blossom's sprouting frae the tree,
And a' creation's gaun to smile.
The mavis, nichtingale, and lark,
The bleating lambs and whistling hynd,
In ilka dale, green shaw, and park,
Will nourish health, and glad your mind.

Sune as the clear gudeman o' day
Does bend his mornin' draught o' dew,
We'll gae to some burn-side and play,
And gather flouirs to busk your brow.
We'll pou the daisies on the green,
The lucken-gowans frae the bog;
Between hands, now and then, we'll lean
And sport upon the velvet fog.

There 's, up into a pleasant glen,
A wee piece frae my father's tower,
A canny, saft, and flowery den,
Which circling birks have form'd a bower.
Whene'er the sun grows high and warm,
We'll to the caller shade remove;
There will I lock thee in my arm,
And love and kiss, and kiss and love.

MY MOTHER'S AYE GLOWRIN' OWER ME;

IN ANSWER TO THE YOUNG LAIRD AND EDINBURGH KATY.

RAMSAY.

Tune—"My Mother's aye glowrin' ower me."

My mother's aye glowrin' ower me,
Though she did the same before me;
I canna get leave
To look at my love,
Or else she'd be like to devour me.

Right fain wad I tak' your offer,
Sweet Sir—but I'll tyne my tocher;
Then, Sandy, ye'll fret,
And wyte your puir Kate,
Whene'er ye keek in your toom coffer.

For though my father has plenty
Of silver, and plenishing dainty,
Yet he's unco sweir
To twine wi' his gear;
And sae we had need to be tenty.

Tutor my parents wi' caution,
Be wylie in ilka motion;
Brag weel o' your land,
And, there's my leal hand,
Win them, I'll be at your devotion.

WANDERING WILLIE.

OLD VERSES.

Tune—"Wandering Willie."

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie!
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame!
Lang have I sought thee, dear have I bought thee;
Now I have gotten my Willie again.

Through the lang muir I have followed my Willie;
Through the lang muir I have followed him hame.
Whatever betide us, nought shall divide us;
Love now rewards all my sorrow and pain.

Here awa, there awa, here awa, Willie!
Here awa, there awa, here awa, hame!
Come, love, believe me, nothing can grieve me,
Ilka thing pleases, when Willie's at hame.*

CAM' YE O'ER FRAE FRANCE.

Cam' ye o'er frae France, came ye doun by Lunnon,
Saw ye Geordie Whelps and his bonny woman,
War' ye at the place ca'd the kittle-housie,
Saw ye Geordie's grace, ridin' on a goosie.

Geordie he's a man, there is little doubt o't,
He's done a' he can, wha can do without it;
Down there cam' a blade, linkin' like a lordie,
He wad drive a trade at the loom o' Geordie.†

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* It is quite as remarkable as it is true, that the mode of courtship among people of the middle ranks in Edinburgh has undergone a complete change in the course of no more than the last thirty years. It used to be customary for lovers to walk together for hours, both during the day and the evening, in the Meadows, or the King's Park, or the fields now occupied by the New Town; practices now only known to artizans and serving-girls.

The song appeared in the Tea-Table Miscellany, 1724.

* From Herd's Collection, 1776.

† This plainly alludes to Count Koningsmark and the Queen.

Tho' the claith were bad, blythely may we niffer,
Gin we get a wab, it mak's little differ;
We hae tint our plaid, bonnet, belt and swordie,
Ha's and maillins braid, but we hae a Geordie.

Hey for Sandy Don, hey for cockolorum,
Hey for Bobbin' John and his Highland quorum;
Many a sword and lance swings at Highland hurdie,
How they'll skip and dance o'er the bum o' Geordie.

THE HIGHLAND LADDIE.

ANOTHER SET.

The lawland lads think they are fine;
But O they're vain and idly gaudy!
How much unlike that gracefu' mien,
And manly looks of my highland laddie?
O my bonny, bonny highland laddie,
My handsome, charming highland laddie;
May heaven still guard, and love reward
Our lawland lass and her highland laddie.

If I were free at will to chuse
To be the wealthiest lawland lady,
I'd take young Donald without trews,
With bonnet blue, and belted plaidy.
O my bonny, &c.

The brawest beau in borrows-town,
In a' his airs, with art made ready,
Compar'd to him, he's but a clown;
He's finer far in's tartan plaidy.
O my bonny, &c.

O'er benty hill with him I'll run,
And leave my lawland kin and dady;
Frae winter's cauld, and summer's sun,
He'll screen me with his highland plaidy.
O my bonny, &c.

A painted room, and silken bed,
May please a lawland laird and lady;
But I can kiss, and be as glad,
Behind a bush in's highland plaidy.
O my bonny, &c.

Few compliments between us pass,
I ca' him my dear highland laddie,
And he ca's me his lawland lass,
Syne rows me in beneath his plaidy.
O my bonny, &c.

Nae greater joy I'll e'er pretend,
Than that his love prove true and steady,
Like mine to him, which ne'er shall end,
While heaven preserves my highland laddie.
O my bonny, &c.

JENNY NETTLES.

Saw ye Jenny Nettles,
Jenny Nettles, Jenny Nettles,
Saw ye Jenny Nettles
Coming frae the market?
Bag and baggage on her back,
Her fee and bountith in her lap;
Bag and baggage on her back,
And a babie in her oxter?

I met ayont the kairny,
Jenny Nettles, Jenny Nettles,
Singing till her bairny,
Robin Rattle's bastard;
To flee the dool upo' the stool,
And ilka ane that mocks her,
She round about seeks Robin out,
To stap it in his oxter

Fy, fy! Robin Rattle,
Robin Rattle, Robin Rattle;
Fy, fy! Robin Rattle,
Use Jenny Nettles kindly:
Score out the blame, and shun the shame,
And without mair debate o't,
Tak hame your wean, make Jenny fain
The leel and leesome gate o't.

O MERRY MAY THE MAID BE.

SIR JOHN CLERK OF PENNYCUICK.

Tune—"Merry may the Maid be."

O, merry may the maid be
That marries the miller!
For, foul day or fair day,
He's aye bringing till her.
H'as aye a penny in his pouch,
For dinner or for supper;
Wi' beef, and pease, and melting cheese,
An' lumps o' yellow butter.

Behind the door stands bags o' meal,
And in the ark is plenty,
And good hard cakes his mither bakes,
And mony a sweeter dainty.
A good fat sow, a sleeky cow,
Are standing in the byre;
Whilst winking puss, wi' mealy mou,
Is playing round the fire.

Good signs are these, my mither says,
And bids me take the miller;
A miller's wife's a merry wife,
And he's aye bringing till her.
For meal or maut she'll never want,
Till wood and water's scanty;
As lang's there's cocks and clockin' hens,
She'll aye hae eggs in plenty.

THE TAILOR.

The Tailor fell thro' the bed thimbles an' a',
The Tailor fell thro' the bed thimbles an' a',
The blankets were thin and the sheets they were sma',
The Tailor fell thro' the bed thimbles an' a'.

The lassie was sleepy and thought on nae ill;
The weather was cauld and the lassie lay still;
The ninth part o' manhood may sure hae its will;
She kent weel the Tailor could do her nae ill.

The Tailor grew droosy, and thought in a dream,
How he caulked out the claith, and then felled in the seam;
A while ayont midnight, before the cocks craw,
The Tailor fell thro' the bed thimbles an' a'.

The day it has come, and the nicht it has gane,
Said the bonnie young lassie when sighing alane:
Since men are but scant, it wad gee me nae pain,
To see the bit Tailor come skippin again.

AWA, WHIGS, AWA!

JACOBITE SONG.

Tune—"Awa, Whigs, awa!"

Our thistles flourish'd fresh and fair,
And bonny bloom'd our roses,
But Whigs came, like a frost in June,
And wither'd a' our posies.
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Ye're but a pack o' traitor loons;
Ye'll ne'er do good at a'.

Our sad decay in church and state
Surpasses my describing;
The Whigs came o'er us for a curse,
And we have done wi' thriving.
Awa, Whigs! awa, &c.

A foreign Whiggish loon bought seeds,
In Scottish yird to cover;
But we'll pu' a' his dibbled leeks,
And pack him to Hanover.
Awa, Whigs! awa, &c.

Our ancient crown's fa'n i' the dust,
Deil blind them wi' the stour o't!
And write their names in his black beuk,
Wha ga'e the Whigs the power o't!
Awa, Whigs! awa, &c.

Grim Vengeance lang has ta'en a nap,
But we may see him wauken:
Gude help the day, when royal heads
Are hunted like a maukin!
Awa, Whigs! awa, &c.

The deil he heard the stour o' tongues,
And ramping came amang us;
But he pitied us, sae cursed wi' Whigs,—
He turn'd and wadna wrang us.
Awa, Whigs! awa, &c.

Sae grim he sat amang the reek,
Thrang bundling brimstone matches;
And croon'd, 'mang the beuk-taking Whigs,
Scraps of auld Calvin's catches.
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Awa, Whigs, awa!
Ye'll rin me out o' wun spunks,
And ne'er do good at a'.

LOCH-NA-GARR.

BYRON.

Away ye gay landscapes, ye gardens of roses,
In you let the minions of luxury rove;
Restore me the rocks where the snow-flake reposes,
If still they are sacred to freedom and love.
Yet, Caledonia, dear are thy mountains,
Round their white summits tho' elements war,
Tho' cataracts foam, 'stead of smooth flowing fountains,
I sigh for the valley of dark Loch-na-garr.

Shades of the dead! have I heard your voices
Rise on the night-rolling breath of the gale,
Surely the soul of the hero rejoices,
And rides on the wind, o'er his own Highland dale.
Round Loch-na-garr, while the stormy mist gathers,
Winter presides in his cold icy car;
Clouds there encircle the forms of my fathers,
They dwell 'mid the tempests of dark Loch-na-garr.

THE MERRY MEN, O.

When I was red, and ripe, and crouse,
Ripe and crouse, ripe and crouse,
My father built a wee house, a wee house,
To haud me frae the men, O.
There came a lad and gae a shout,
Gae a shout, gae a shout,

The wa's fell in, and I fell out,
Amang the merry men, O.

I dream sic sweet things in my sleep,
In my sleep, in my sleep,
My minny says I winna keep,
Amang sae mony men, O.
When plums are ripe, they should be poo'd,
Should be poo'd, should be poo'd,
When maids are ripe, they should be woo'd
At seven years and ten, O.

My love, I cried it, at the port,
At the port, at the port,
The captain bade a guinea for't,
The colonel he bade ten, O.
The chaplain he bade siller for't,
Siller for't, siller for't,
But the sergeant bade me naething for't,
Yet he cam farthest ben, O.

KENMURE'S ON AND AWA, WILLIE.

Tune—"Kenmure's on and awa."

O, KENMURE's on and awa, Willie,
O, Kenmure's on and awa;
And Kenmure's lord's the bravest lord
That ever Galloway saw.

Succes to Kenmure's band, Willie,
Success to Kenmure's band!
There's no a heart that fears a Whig,
That rides by Kenmure's hand.

Here's Kenmure's health in wine, Willie,
Here's Kenmure's health in wine!
There ne'er was a coward o' Kenmure's blude,
Nor yet o' Gordon's line.

O, Kenmure's lads are men, Willie,
O, Kenmure's lads are men!
Their hearts and swords are metal true;
And that their faes shall ken.

They'll live or die wi' fame, Willie,
They'll live or die wi' fame;
But sune wi' sound and victorie
May Kenmure's lord come hame!

Here's *him* that's far awa, Willie,
Here's *him* that's far awa;
And here's the flower that I lo'e best,
The rose that's like the snaw.

POLWART ON THE GREEN.

At Polwart on the green,
If you'll meet me the morn,
Where lasses do convene
To dance about the thorn,
A kindly welcome you shall meet
Frae her wha likes to view
A lover and a lad complete,
The lad and lover you.

Let dorty dames say Na,
As lang as e'er they please,
Seem caulder than the sna',
While inwardly they bleeze;
But I will frankly shaw my mind,
And yield my heart to thee;
Be ever to the captive kind,
That langs na to be free.

At Polwart on the green,
Amang the new-mawn hay,
With sangs and dancing keen
We'll pass the heartsome day.
At night, if beds be o'er thrang laid,
And thou be twin'd of thine,
Thou shalt be welcome, my dear lad,
To take a part of mine.

HAME NEVER CAME HE.

SADDLED, and bridled, and booted rode he,
A plume in his helmet, a sword at his knee;
But toom cam' the saddle, all bluidy to see,
And hame cam' the steed, but hame never cam' he.

Down cam' his gray father, sabbin' sae sair,
Down cam' his auld mither, tearing her hair,
Down cam' his sweet wife wi' bonnie bairns three,
Ane at her bosom, and twa at her knee.

There stood the fleet steed all foamin' and hot,
There shriek'd his sweet wife, and sank on the spot,
There stood his gray father, weeping sae free,
So hame cam' his steed, but hame never cam' he.

THE BOB OF DUMBLANE.

LASSIE, lend me your braw hemp heckle,
And I'll lend you my thripling kame;
For fainness, deary, I'll gar ye keckle,
If ye'll go dance the Bob of Dumblane.
Haste ye, gang to the ground of your trunkies,
Busk ye braw, and dinna think shame;
Consider in time, if leading of monkies
Be better than dancing the Bob of Dumblane.

Be frank, my lassie, lest I grow fickle,
And take my word and offer again,
Syne ye may chance to repent it mickle,
Ye did na accept the Bob of Dumblane.

The dinner, the piper, and priest shall be ready,
And I'm grown dowy with lying my lane;
Away then, leave baith miuny and dady,
And try with me the Bob of Dumblane.

LOCHABER NO MORE.

Tune—"Lochaber no more."

Farewell to Lochaber, and farewell my Jean,
Where heartsome with thee I've mony day been;
For Lochaber no more, Lochaber no more,
We'll may be return to Lochaber no more.
These tears that I shed, they are a' for my dear,
And no for the dangers attending on weir,
Tho' bore on rough seas to a far bloody shore,
May be to return to Lochaber no more.

Tho' hurricanes rise, and rise ev'ry wind,
They'll ne'er make a tempest like that in my mind.
Tho' loudest of thunder on louder waves roar,
That's naething like leaving my love on the shore.
To leave thee behind me my heart is sair pain'd,
By ease that's inglorious, no fame can be gain'd.
And beauty and love's the reward of the brave,
And I must deserve it before I can crave.

Then glory, my Jeany, maun plead my excuse,
Since honour commands me, how can I refuse?
Without it I ne'er can have merit for thee,
And without thy favour I'd better not be.
I gae then, my lass, to win honour and fame,
And if I should luck to come gloriously hame,
I'll bring a heart to thee with love running o'er,
And then I'll leave thee and Lochaber no more.

JOCKY SAID TO JEANY.

Jocky said to Jeany, Jeany, wilt thou do't?
Ne'er a fit, quo' Jeany, for my tocher-good,
For my tocher-good, I winna marry thee.
E'ens ye like, quo' Jockey, ye may let it be.

I hae gowd and gear, I hae land enough,
I hae seven good owsen ganging in a pleugh,
Ganging in a pleugh, and linking o'er the lee,
And gin ye winna tak me, I can let ye be.

I hae a good ha' house, a barn and a byre,
A stack afore the door, I'll make a rantin fire,
I'll make a rantin fire, and merry shall we be:
And gin ye winna tak me, I can let ye be.

Jeany said to Jocky, Gin ye winna tell,
Ye shall be the lad, I'll be the lass mysell.
Ye're a bonny lad, and I'm a lassie free,
Ye're welcomer to tak me than to let me be.

THE LOWLANDS OF HOLLAND.

ANOTHER VERSION.

The luve that I hae chosen
I'll therewith be content;
The saut sea will be frozen
Before that I repent;
Repent it will I never
Until the day I die,
Though the Lowlands of Holland
Hae twined my love and me.

My luve lies in the saut sea,
And I am on the side;
Enough to break a young thing's heart
Wha lately was a bride—
Wha lately was a happy bride,
And pleasure in her ee;
But the Lowlands of Holland
Hae twined my love and me.

Oh! Holland is a barren place,
In it there grows nae grain,
Nor ony habitation
Wherein for to remain;
But the sugar canes are plenty,
And the wine draps frae the tree;
But the Lowlands of Holland
Hae twined my love and me.

My love he built a bonnie ship,
And sent her to the sea,
Wi' seven score guid mariners
To bear her companie.
Three score to the bottom gaed,
And three score died at sea;
And the Lowlands of Holland
Hae twined my love and me.

JENNY DANG THE WEAVER.

Jenny lap, and Jenny flang,
Jenny dang the weaver;
The piper played as Jenny sprang,
An' aye she dang the weaver.

As I cam in by Fisherrow,
Musselburgh was near me,
I threw aff the mussel-pock,
And courtit wi' my deerie.

Had Jenny's apron bidden down
The kirk wad ne'er hae ken'd it;
But now the word 's gane thro' the town,
The devil canna mend it.

Jenny lap, and Jenny flang,
Jenny dang the weaver;
The piper played as Jenny sprang,
And aye she dang the weaver.

AS I WENT OUT AE MAY MORNING.

As I went out ae May morning,
Ae May morning it happened to be,
O there I saw a very bonnie lass
Come linkin' o'er the lea to me.
And O she was a weel-faud lass,
Sweet as the flower sae newly sprung;
I said, fair maid, an' ye fancy me,
When she laughing said, I am too young.

To be your bride I am too young,
And far our proud to be your loon;
This is the merry month of May,
But I'll be aulder, Sir, in June.
The hawthorns flourished fresh and fair,
And o'er our heads the small birds sing,
And never a word the lassie said,
But, gentle Sir, I am too young.

THE WEE, WEE GERMAN LAIRDIE.

Wha the deil hae we gotten for a king,
But a wee, wee German lairdie?
And, when we gaed to bring him,
He was delving in his yardie:
Sheughing kail, and laying leeks,
But the hose, and but the breeks;
And up his beggar duds he cleeks—
This wee, wee German lairdie.

And he's clapt down in our gudeman's chair,
The wee, wee German lairdie;
And he's brought fouth o' foreign trash,
And dibbled them in his yardie.
He's pu'd the rose o' English loons,
And broken the harp o' Irish clowns;
But our thistle taps will jag his thumbs—
This wee, wee German lairdie.

Come up amang our Highland hills,
Thou wee, wee German lairdie,
And see the Stuart's lang-kail thrive
We dibbled in our yardie:
And if a stock ye dare to pu',
Or haud the yoking o' a plough,
We'll break your sceptre o'er your mou',
Thou wee bit German lairdie.

Our hills are steep, our glens are deep,
Nae fitting for a yardie;
And our Norland thistles winna pu',
Thou wee bit German lairdie:
And we've the trenching blades o' weir,
Wad prune ye o' your German gear—
We'll pass ye 'neath the claymore's shear,
Thou feckless German lairdie!

Auld Scotland, thou'rt ower cauld a hole
For nursin' siccan vermin;
But the very dougs o' England's court
They bark and howl in German.
Then keep thy dibble in thy ain hand,
Thy spade but and thy yardie;
For wha the deil hae we gotten for a king,
But a wee, wee German lairdie?

THE FORAY.

SIR WALTER SCOTT.

The last of our steers on the board has been spread,
And the last flask of wine in our goblets is red:
Up, up, my brave kinsmen!—belt swords and begone;
There are dangers to dare, and there's spoil to won!

The eyes that so lately mixed glances with ours,
For a space must be dim, as they gaze from the towers,
And strive to distinguish, through tempest and gloom,
The prance of the steeds and the top of the plume.

The rain is descending, the wind rises loud,
The moon her red beacon has veiled with a cloud—
'Tis the better, my mates, for the warder's dull eye
Shall in confidence slumber, nor dream we are nigh.

Our steeds are impatient—I hear my blythe grey;
There is life in his hoof-clang and hope in his neigh;
Like the flash of a meteor, the glance of his mane
Shall marshal your march through the darkness and rain.

The draw-bridge has dropped, and the bugle has blown;
One pledge is to quaff yet—then mount and begone:
To their honour and peace that shall rest with the slain!
To their health and their glee that see Teviot again!

BURNS'S SONGS.

ADIEU! A HEART-WARM FOND ADIEU!

Tune—"The Peacock."

Adieu! a heart-warm fond adieu!
Dear brothers of the mystic tie!
Ye favour'd, ye enlighten'd few,
Companions of my social joy!
Though I to foreign lands must hie,
Pursuing Fortune's sliddry ba',
With melting heart, and brimful eye,
I'll mind you still, though far awa'.

Oft have I met your social band,
And spent the cheerful festive night;
Oft, honour'd with supreme command,
Presided o'er the sons of light;
And by that hieroglyphic bright,
Which none but craftsmen ever saw!
Strong memory on my heart shall write
Those happy scenes when far awa!

May freedom, harmony, and love,
Unite you in the grand design,
Beneath the Omniscient Eye above,
The glorious architect divine!
That you may keep th' unerring line,
Still rising by the plummet's law,
Till order bright completely shine—
Shall be my prayer when far awa.

And you, farewell! whose merits claim,
Justly, that highest badge to wear!
Heaven bless your honour'd, noble name,
To masonry and Scotia dear!
A last request permit me here,
When yearly ye assemble a',
One round, I ask it with a tear,
To him, the bard, that's far awa.*

AE FOND KISS.

Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
War in sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

Who shall say that fortune grieves him,
While the star of hope she leaves him?
Me, nae cheerfu' twinkle lights me;
Dark despair around benights me.

I'll ne'er blame thy partial fancy,
Naething could resist my Nancy;
But to see her, was to love her;
Love but her, and love for ever.
Had we never loved sae kindly,
Had we never loved sae blindly;
Never met—or never parted,
We had ne'er been broken-hearted.

Fare thee well, thou first and fairest!
Fare thee well, thou best and dearest!
Thine be ilka joy and treasure,
Peace, enjoyment, love, and pleasure!
Ae fond kiss, and then we sever;
Ae farewell, alas, for ever!
Deep in heart-wrung tears I'll pledge thee,
War in sighs and groans I'll wage thee.

AFTON WATER.

Tune—"The Yellow-hair'd Laddie."

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes,
Flow gently, I'll sing thee a song in thy praise;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream;
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

Thou stock-dove, whose echo resounds through the glen,
Ye wild-whistling blackbirds, in yon flowery den,
Thou green-crested lapwing, thy screaming forbear,
I charge you, disturb not my slumbering fair.

How lofty, sweet Afton, thy neighbouring hills,
Far mark'd with the courses of clear-winding rills;
There daily I wander, as morn rises high,
My flocks and my Mary's sweet cot in my eye.

How pleasant thy banks and green valleys below,
Where wild in the woodlands the primroses blow;
There oft, as mild evening creeps o'er the lea,
The sweet-scented birk shades my Mary and me.

* Written as a sort of farewell to the Masonic companions of his youth, when the poet was on the point of leaving Scotland for Jamaica, 1786.

Thy crystal stream, Afton, how lovely it glides,
And winds by the cot where my Mary resides!
How wanton thy waters her snowy feet lave,
As, gath'ring sweet flow'rets, she stems thy clear wave!

Flow gently, sweet Afton, among thy green braes;
Flow gently, sweet river, the theme of my lays;
My Mary's asleep by thy murmuring stream;
Flow gently, sweet Afton, disturb not her dream.

AGAIN REJOICING NATURE SEES.

Tune—"Johnnie's Grey Breeks."

Again rejoicing nature sees
Her robe assume its vernal hues;
Her leafy locks wave in the breeze,
All freshly steep'd in morning dews.

In vain to me the cowslips blaw;
In vain to me the vi'lets spring;
In vain to me, in glen or shaw,
The mavis and the lintwhite sing.

The merry ploughboy cheers his team;
Wi' joy the tentie seedman stauks;
But life to me's a weary dream,
A dream of ane that never wauks.

The wanton coot the water skims;
Amang the reeds the ducklings cry;
The stately swan majestic swims;
And every thing is blest but I.

The shepherd steeks his faulding slaps,
And o'er the moorland whistles shrill;
Wi' wild, unequal, wandering step,
I meet him on the dewy hill.

And when the lark, 'tween light and dark,
Blithe waukens by the daisy's side,
And mounts and sings on fluttering wings,
A woe-worn ghaist, I hameward glide.

Come, Winter, with thine angry howl,
And raging bend the naked tree;
Thy gloom will soothe my cheerless soul,
When nature all is sad like me!

A HIGHLAND LAD MY LOVE WAS BORN.

THE "RAUCLE CARLINE'S" SONG IN THE "JOLLY BEGGARS."

Tune—"O an ye war dead, guidman!"

A Highland lad my love was born,
The Lawland laws he held in scorn;
But he still was faithful to his clan,
My gallant, braw John Highlandman!
Sing hey, my braw John Highlandman!
Sing ho, my braw John Highlandman!
There's not a' lad in a the land,
Was match for my braw John Highlandman!

With his philabeg and tartan plaid,
And gude claymore down by his side,
The ladies' hearts he did trepan,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

We ranged a' from Tweed to Spey,
And lived like lords and ladies gay;
For a Lawland face he feared none,
My gallant braw John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

They banished him beyond the sea;
But, ere the bud was on the tree,
Adown my cheeks the pearls ran,
Embracing my braw John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

But, och! they catched him at the last,
And bound him in a dungeon fast;
My curse upon them every one,
They've hanged my braw John Highlandman!
Sing hey, &c.

And now, a widow, I must mourn
Departed joys that ne'er return,
No comfort but a hearty can,
When I think on John Highlandman.
Sing hey, &c.

AMANG THE TREES WHERE HUMMING BEES.

Tune—"The King of France, he rade a Race."

Amang the trees where humming bees
At buds and flowers were hinging, O;
Auld Caledon drew out her drone,
And to her pipe was singing, O;
'Twas Pibroch, sang, strathspey, or reels,
She dirl'd them aff, fu' clearly, O;
When there cam a yell o' foreign squeels,
That dang her tapsalteerie, O—

Their capon craws and queer ha ha's,
They made our lugs grow eerie, O;
The hungry bike did scrape and pike
'Till we were wae and weary, O—
But a royal ghaist wha ance was cas'd
A prisoner aughteen year awa,
He fir'd a fiddler in the North
That dang them tapsalteerie, O.

A MAN'S A MAN FOR A' THAT.

Tune—" For a' that, and a' that.

Is there, for honest poverty,
  That hangs his head, and a' that?
The coward-slave, we pass him by;
  We daur be puir for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
  Our toils obscure, and a' that,
The rank is but the guinea-stamp—
  The man's the gowd for a' that.

What though on hamely fare we dine,
  Wear hoddin-grey, and a' that?
Gie fools their silks, and knaves their wine;
  A man's a man for a' that;
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their tinsel show, and a' that,
The honest man, though e'er sae puir,
  Is king o' men for a' that.

Ye see yon birkie, ca'd a lord,
  Wha struts, and stares, and a' that;
Though hundreds worship at his word,
  He's but a cuif for a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
  His ribbon, star, and a' that,
The man of independent mind,
  He looks and laughs at a' that.

A king can make a belted knight,
  A marquis, duke, and a' that;
But an honest man's aboon his micht,
  Gude faith, he maunna fa' that!
For a' that, and a' that,
  Their dignities, and a' that,
The pith o' sense, the pride o' worth,
  Are higher ranks for a' that.

Then let us pray, that come it may,
  As come it will, for a' that,
That sense and worth, o'er a' the earth,
  May bear the gree, and a' that.
For a' that, and a' that,
  It's comin' yet for a' that,
That man to man, the warld o'er,
  Shall brothers be for a' that.

ANNA.

Tune—" Banks of Banna."

Yestreen I had a pint o' wine,
  A place where body saw na;
Yestreen lay on this breast o' mine
  The raven locks of Anna.
The hungry Jew in wilderness,
  Rejoicing ower his manna,
Was naething to my hinny bliss,
  Upon the lips of Anna.

Ye monarchs tak the east and west,
  Frae Indus to Savannah!
Gie me within my straining grasp
  The melting form of Anna.
There I'll despise imperial charms,
  An empress or sultana,
While dying raptures, in her arms,
  I give and take with Anna.

Awa, thou flaunting god of day!
  Awa, thou pale Diana!
Ilk star gae hide thy twinkling ray,
  When I'm to meet my Anna.
Come, in thy raven plumage, night,
  Sun, moon, and stars, withdrawn a';
And bring an angel pen to write
  My transports with my Anna.*

ANNIE.

Tune—" Allan Water."

I walked out with the Museum in my hand, and turning up Allan Water, the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air, so I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn till I wrote one to suit the measure.

By Allan stream I chanced to rove,
  While Phœbus sank beyond Benledi,
The winds were whisp'ring through the grove,
  The yellow corn was waving ready:
I listen'd to a lover's sang,
  And thought on youthful pleasures many;
And aye the wild-wood echoes rang—
  O, dearly do I love thee, Annie!

O, happy be the woodbine bower;
  Nae nightly bogle mak it eerie;
Nor ever sorrow stain the hour,
  The place and time I meet my dearie!
Her head upon my throbbing breast,
  She, sinking, said, I'm thine for ever!
While many a kiss the seal impress'd,
  The sacred vow, we ne'er should sever.

The haunt o' Spring's the primrose brae;
  The Simmer joys the flocks to follow;
How cheerie, through her short'ning day,
  Is Autumn in her weeds of yellow!
But can they melt the glowing heart,
  Or chain the soul in speechless pleasure,
Or through each nerve the rapture dart,
  Like meeting her, our bosom's treasure?

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* This song, like "Highland Mary," affords a strong proof of the power which poetry possesses of raising and subliming objects. Highland Mary was the dairy-maid of Coilsfield; Anna is said to have been something meaner. The poet sure was in a fine phrenzy-rolling when he said, "I think this is the best love-song I ever wrote."

A RED RED ROSE.

Tune—"Low down in the Brume."

O, my luve's like a red red rose,
That's newly sprung in June;
O, my luve's like the melodie,
That's sweetly play'd in tune.

As fair art thou, my bonnie lass,
Sae deep in luve am I;
And I will love thee still, my dear,
Till a' the seas gang dry.

Till a' the seas gang dry, my dear,
And the rocks melt wi' the sun;
I will love thee still, my dear,
While the sands o' life shall run.

And fare thee weel, my only luve,
And fare thee weel a while!
And I will come again, my luve,
Though it were ten thousand mile.

A ROSE-BUD BY MY EARLY WALK.

This song I composed on Miss Jenny Cruikshank, only child to my worthy friend Mr. William Cruikshank of the High-School, Edinburgh. The air is by David Sillar, *quondam* merchant, now schoolmaster, in Irvine: the Davie to whom I address my poetical epistle.

A rose-bud by my early walk,
Adown a corn-inclosed bawk,
Sae gently bent its thorny stalk,
All on a dewy morning.

Ere twice the shades o' dawn are fled,
In a' its crimson glory spread,
And drooping rich the dewy head,
It scents the early morning.

Within the bush, her covert nest
A little linnet fondly prest,
The dew sat chilly on her breast
Sae early in the morning.

She soon shall see her tender brood,
The pride, the pleasure o' the wood,
Amang the fresh green leaves bedewed,
Awake the early morning.

So thou, dear bird, young Jeany fair,
On trembling string or vocal air,
Shall sweetly pay the tender care
That tents thy early morning.

So thou, sweet rose-bud, young and gay,
Shalt beauteous blaze upon the day,
And bless the parent's evening ray
That watched thy early morning.

A SOUTHLAND JENNY.

This is a popular Ayrshire song, though the notes were never taken down before.—It, as well as many of the ballad tunes in this collection, was written from Mrs. Burns's voice.

A Southland Jenny that was right bonny,
Had for a suitor a Norland Johnnie,
But he was sicken a bashfu' wooer,
That he could scarcely speak unto her.

But blinks o' her beauty, and hopes o' her siller,
Forced him at last to tell his mind till her;
My dear, quo' he, we'll nae langer tarry,
Gin ye can lo'e me, let's o'er the moor and marry.

Come awa then, my Norland laddie,
Tho' we gang neat, some are mair gaudy;
Albeit I hae neither land nor money,
Come, and I'll ware my beauty on thee.

Ye lasses o' the South, ye're a' for dressin;
Lasses o' the North, mind milkin and threshin;
My minnie wad be angry, and sae wad my daddie,
Should I marry ane as dink as a lady.

I maun hae a wife that will rise i' the mornin,
Cruddle a' the milk, and keep the house a scauldin;
Tulzie wi' her neebors, and learn at my minnie,
A Norland Jocky maun hae a Norland Jenny.

My father's only dochter, wi' farms and siller ready,
Wad be ill bestowed upon sic a clownish body;
A' that I said was to try what was in thee,
Gae hame, ye Norland Jockie, and court your Norland Jenny!

AULD LANG SYNE.

Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And never brought to mind?
Should auld acquaintance be forgot,
And auld lang syne!
For auld lang syne, my jo,
For auld lang syne,
We'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne!

And surely ye'll be your pint stoup!
And surely I'll be mine!
And we'll tak a cup o' kindness yet,
For auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae run about the braes,
And pou't the gowans fine;
But we've wander'd mony a weary foot
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

We twa hae paidl't i' the burn,
Frae morning sun 'till dine;
But seas between us braid hae roar'd,
Sin auld lang syne.
For auld, &c.

And there's a han', my trusty fiere,
And gies a han' o' thine!
And we'll tak a right gude willy-waught
For auld lang syne!
For auld, &c.

AULD ROB MORRIS.

THERE's auld Rob Morris, that wins in yon glen,
He's the king o' gude fellows, and wale of auld men;
He has gowd in his coffers; he has ousen and kine,
And ae bonnie lassie, his darling and mine.

She's fresh in the morning, the fairest in May;
She's sweet as the evening among the new hay;
As blythe, and as artless, as the lamb on the lea;
And dear to my heart as the light to my ee.

But oh! she's an heiress: auld Robin's a laird,
And my daddie has nought but a cothouse and yard.
A wooer like me mauna hope to come speed.
The wounds I must hide that will soon be my dead.

The day comes to me, but delight brings me nane;
The night comes to me, but my rest it is gane;
I wander my lane like a night-troubled ghaist,
And I sigh as my heart it wad burst in my breast!

Oh had she but been of a lower degree,
I then might hae hop'd she wad smil'd upon me;
O how past deserving had then been my bless,
As now my distraction, no words can express.

BESSY AND HER SPINNING WHEEL.

Tune—"The bottom of the Punch Bowl."

O LEEZE me on my spinning-wheel!
O leeze me on my rock and reel!
Frae tap to tae that cleeds me bien,
And haps me feil * and warm at e'en!
I'll set me doun, and sing, and spin,
While laigh descends the simmer sun;
Blest wi' content, and milk, and meal—
O leeze me on my spinning-wheel!

On ilka hand the burnies trot,
And meet below my theekit cot;
The scented birk and hawthorn white
Across the pool their arms unite,
Alike to screen the birdie's nest,
And little fishes' caller rest;
The sun blinks kindly in the biel,
Where blythe I turn my spinning-wheel.

On lofty aiks the cushats wail,
And echo cons the doolfu' tale;
The lintwhites in the hazel braes,
Delighted, rival ither's lays:
The craik amang the clover hay,
The paitrick whirring ower the lea,
The swallow jinkin' round my shiel;
Amuse me at my spinning-wheel.

Wi' sma' to sell, and less to buy,
Aboon distress, below envy,
O wha wad leave this humble state,
For a' the pride of a' the great?
Amid their flaring idle toys,
Amid their cumbrous, dinsome joys,
Can they the peace and pleasure feel
Of Bessy at her spinning-wheel?

* Covers me with a stuff agreeable to the skin.

BEWARE O' BONNIE ANN.

I COMPOSED this song out of compliment to Miss Ann Masterton, the daughter of my friend, Allan Masterton, the author of the air of *Strathallan's Lament*, and two or three others in this work.

YE gallants bright I red ye right,
Beware o' bonnie Ann;
Her comely face sae fu' o' grace,
Your heart she will trepan.
Her een sae bright, like stars by night,
Her skin is like the swan;
Sae jimply lac'd her genty waist,
That sweetly ye might span.

Youth, grace, and love, attendant move,
And pleasure leads the van:
In a' their charms, and conquering arms,
They wait on bonnie Ann.
The captive bands may chain the hands,
But love enslaves the man;
Ye gallants braw, I red you a',
Beware o' bonnie Ann.

BEHOLD THE HOUR, THE BOAT ARRIVE.

Tune—" Oran Gaoil."

Behold the hour, the boat arrive ;
Thou goest, thou darling of my heart !
Sever'd from thee, can I survive ?
But fate has will'd, and we must part.
I'll often greet this surging swell,
Yon distant isle will often hail :
" E'en here I took my last farewell,
There latest mark'd her vanish'd sail."

Along the solitary shore,
While flitting sea-fowl round me cry,
Across the rolling, dashing roar,
I'll westward turn my wistful eye :
Happy, thou Indian grove, I'll say,
Where now my Nancy's path may be !
While through thy sweets she loves to stray.
Oh, tell me, does she muse on me ?

BEYOND THEE, DEARIE.

It is remarkable of this air, that it is the confine of that country where the greatest part of our Lowland music, (so far as from the title, words, &c. we can localize it), has been composed. From Craigie-burn, near Moffat, until one reaches the West Highlands, we have scarcely one slow air of any antiquity.

The song was composed on a passion which a Mr. Gillespie, a particular friend of mine, had for a Miss Lorimer, afterwards a Mrs. Whelpdale.—The young lady was born at Craigie-burn wood.—The chorus is part of an old foolish ballad.—

Beyond thee, dearie, beyond thee, dearie,
And O to be lying beyond thee,
O sweetly, soundly, weel may he sleep,
That's laid in the bed beyond thee.

CRAIGIE-BURN WOOD.

Sweet closes the evening on Craigie-burn wood,
And blythely awakens the morrow ;
But the pride of the spring in the Craigie-burn wood,
Can yield me to nothing but sorrow.
Beyond thee, &c.

I see the spreading leaves and flowers,
I hear the wild birds singing ;
But pleasure they hae nane for me,
While care my heart is wringing.
Beyond thee, &c.

I canna tell, I maun na tell,
I dare na for your anger ;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.
Beyond, thee, &c.

I see thee gracefu', straight and tall,
I see thee sweet and bonnie,
But oh, what will my torments be,
If thou refuse thy Johnie !
Beyond thee, &c.

To see thee in anither's arms,
In love to lie and languish,
'Twad be my dead, that will be seen,
My heart wad burst wi' anguish.
Beyond thee, &c.

But Jeanie, say thou wilt be mine,
Say, thou lo'es nane before me ;
And a' my days o' life to come,
I'll gratefully adore thee.
Beyond thee, &c.

BLYTHE HAE I BEEN ON YON HILL.

Tune—" Liggeram cosh."

Blythe hae I been on yon hill,
As the lambs before me ;
Careless ilka thought and free,
As the breeze flew o'er me :
Now nae langer sport and play,
Mirth or saug can please me :
Lesley is sae fair and coy,
Care and anguish seize me.

Heavy, heavy is the task,
Hopeless love declaring :
Trembling, I dow nocht but glowr,
Sighing, dumb, despairing !
If she winna ease the thraws,
In my bosom swelling ;
Underneath the grass-green sod,
Soon maun be my dwelling.

BLYTHE WAS SHE.

Blythe, blythe and merry was she,
Blythe was she but and ben ;
Blythe by the banks of Ern,
And blythe in Glenturit glen.

By Oughtertyre grows the aik,
On Yarrow banks, the birken shaw ;
But Phemie was a bonnier lass
Than braes o' Yarrow ever saw.
Blythe, &c.

Her looks were like a flow'r in May,
Her smile was like a simmer morn ;

She tripped by the banks of Ern,
As light's a bird upon a thorn.
Blythe, &c.

Her bonny face it was as meek
As ony lamb upon a lee;
The evening sun was ne'er sae sweet
As was the blink o' Phemie's e'e.
Blythe, &c.

The Highland hill's I've wander'd wide,
And o'er the Lowlands I hae been;
But Phemie was the blythest lass
That ever trod the dewy green.
Blythe, &c.

BONNIE WEE THING.

Tune—"Bonnie Wee Thing."

Bonnie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine.

Wistfully I look and languish
In that bonnie face o' thine;
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty,
In ae constellation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!

Bonnie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing, wert thou mine,
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine.

BONNIE BELL.

The smiling Spring comes in rejoicing,
And surly Winter grimly flies;
Now crystal clear are the falling waters,
And bonnie blue are the sunny skies;
Fresh o'er the mountains breaks forth the morning,
The ev'ning gilds the ocean's swell;
All creatures joy in the sun's returning,
And I rejoice in my bonnie Bell.

The flow'ry Spring leads sunny Summer,
And yellow Autumn presses near,
Then in his turn comes gloomy Winter,
'Till smiling Spring again appear.
Thus seasons dancing, life advancing,
Old Time and Nature their changes tell,
But never ranging, still unchanging
I adore my bonnie Bell.

BONNIE LESLEY.

Tune—"The Collier's bonnie Lassie.

O, saw ye bonnie Lesley,
As she gaed o'er the Border?
She's gane, like Alexander,
To spread her conquests farther.
To see her is to love her,
And love but her for ever;
For nature made her what she is,
And never made anither!

Thou art a queen, fair Lesley,
Thy subjects we before thee:
Thou art divine, fair Lesley;
The hearts o' men adore thee.
The Deil he couldna scaith thee,
Or aught that wad belang thee;
He'd look into thy bonnie face,
And say, I canna wrang thee!

The Powers aboon will tent thee,
Misfortune shanna steer thee;
Thou'rt like themselves sae lovely,
That ill they'll ne'er let near thee.
Return again, fair Lesley,
Return to Caledonie!
That we may brag we hae a lass
There's nane again sae bonnie.*

BONNIE JEAN.

Tune—"Bonnie Jean."

There was a lass, and she was fair,
At kirk and market to be seen;
When a' the fairest maids were met,
The fairest maid was bonnie Jean.

And aye she wrought her mammie's wark,
And aye she sang sae merrilie;
The blythest bird upon the bush
Had ne'er a lighter heart than she.

But hawks will rob the tender joys
That bless the little lintwhite's nest;
And frost will blight the fairest flowers,
And love will break the soundest rest.

Young Robie was the brawest lad,
The flower and pride of a' the glen;
And he had owsen, sheep, and kye,
And wanton naigies nine or ten.

He gaed wi' Jeanie to the tryste,
He danced wi' Jeanie on the down;
And lang ere witless Jeanie wist,
Her heart was tint, her peace was stown.

* Written in honour of Miss Lesley Baillie of Ayrshire, (now Mrs. Cumming of Logie), when on her way to England, through Dumfries.

As in the bosom o' the stream
The moonbeam dwells at dewy e'en,
So trembling, pure, was tender love,
Within the breast o' bonnie Jean.

And now she works her mammie's wark,
And aye she sighs wi' grief and pain;
Yet wistna what her ail might be,
Or what wad make her weel again.

But didna Jeanie's heart loup light,
And didna joy blink in her ee,
As Robie tauld a tale o' love,
Ae e'ening, on the lily lea?

The sun was sinking in the west,
The birds sang sweet in ilka grove;
His cheek to hers he fondly prest,
And whisper'd thus his tale of love:

O Jeanie fair, I lo'e thee dear;
O canst thou think to fancy me?
Or wilt thou leave thy mammie's cot,
And learn to tent the farms wi' me?

At barn nor byre thou shalt na drudge,
Or naething else to trouble thee;
But stray amang the heather-bells,
And tent the waving corn wi' me.

Now what could artless Jeanie do?
She had nae will to say him na:
At length she blush'd a sweet consent,
And love was aye between them twa.

HEY TUTTIE TAITTIE.

I have met the tradition universally over Scotland, and particularly about Stirling, in the neighbourhood of the scene, that this air was Robert Bruce's march at the Battle of Bannockburn.

BRUCE'S ADDRESS

TO HIS TROOPS BEFORE THE BATTLE OF BANNOCKBURN.

Tune—"Hey tuttie taittie."

Scots, wha hae wi' Wallace bled!
Scots, wham Bruce has aften led!
Welcome to your gory bed,
Or to victorie!

Now's the day, and now's the hour:
See the front of battle lour:
See approach proud Edward's power—
Chains and slaverie!

Wha will be a traitor knave?
Wha can fill a coward's grave?
Wha sae base as be a slave?
Let him turn and flee!

Wha, for Scotland's king and law,
Freedom's sword will strongly draw,
Freeman stand, or freeman fa',
Let him follow me!

By oppression's woes and pains,
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free.

Lay the proud usurpers low,
Tyrants fall in every foe,
Liberty's in every blow,
Let us do, or die!

CA' THE YOWES TO THE KNOWES.

Ca' the yowes to the knowes,
Ca' them where the heather grows,
Ca' them where the burnie rowes,
My bonnie dearie.

Hark, the mavis' evening sang,
Sounding Cluden's woods amang;
Then a-faulding let us gang,
My bonnie dearie.

We'll gang doun by Cluden side,
Through the hazels spreading wide
O'er the waves that sweetly glide,
My bonnie dearie.

Yonder Cluden's silent towers,
Where, at moonshine midnight hours,
O'er the dewy budding flowers
The fairies dance sae cheerie.

Ghaist nor bogle shalt thou fear;
Thou'rt to love and heaven sae dear,
Nocht of ill may come thee near,
My bonnie dearie.

Fair and lovely as thou art,
Thou hast stoun my very heart;
I can die—but canna part,
My bonnie dearie.

CANST THOU LEAVE ME THUS, MY KATY?

Tune—"Roy's wife."

Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy?
Well thou knowest my aching heart,
And canst thou leave me thus for pity?

Is this thy plighted fond regard,
Thus cruelly to part, my Katy?
Is this thy faithful swain's reward—
An aching, broken heart, my Katy?

Farewell! and ne'er such sorrows tear
That fickle heart of thine, my Katy!
Thou may'st find those will love thee dear—
But not a love like mine, my Katy.

REPLY TO THE ABOVE.

BY A YOUNG ENGLISH GENTLEWOMAN. FOUND AMONGST BURNS'S MANUSCRIPTS AFTER HIS DECEASE.

Stay, my Willie—yet believe me,
Stay, my Willie—yet believe me;
'Tweel, thou know'st na every pang
Wad wring my bosom shouldst thou leave me.

Tell me that thou yet art true,
And a' my wrongs shall be forgiven;
And when this heart proves false to thee,
Yon sun shall cease its course in heaven.

But to think I was betray'd,
That falsehood e'er our loves should sunder!
To take the floweret to my breast,
And find the guilefu' serpent under!

Could I hope thou'dst ne'er deceive me,
Celestial pleasures, might I choose 'em,
I'd slight, nor seek in other spheres
That heaven I'd find within thy bosom.

CALEDONIA.

Their groves O sweet myrtles let foreign lands reckon,
Where bright-beaming summers exalt the perfume;
Far dearer to me yon lone glen o' green breckan,
With the burn stealing under the lang yellow broom.

Far dearer to me yon humble broom bowers,
Where the blue bell and gowan lurk lowly unseen;
For there, lightly tripping amang the wild flowers,
A listening the linnet, aft wanders my Jean.

Though rich is the breeze, in their gay sunny vallies,
And cauld Caledonia's blast on the wave;
Their sweet-scented woodlands, that skirt the proud palace,
What are they?—the haunt o' the tyrant and slave!

The slave's spicy forests and gold-bubbling fountains,
The brave Caledonian views wi' disdain;
He wanders as free as the wind on his mountains,
Save love's willing fetters—the chains of his Jean.*

CHLOE.

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH SONG

It was the charming month of May,
When all the flowers were fresh and gay,
One morning by the break of day,
The youthful, charming Chloe;

From peaceful slumber she arose,
Girt on her mantle and her hose,
And o'er the flowery mead she goes,
The youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she by the dawn,
Youthful Chloe, charming Chloe,
Tripping o'er the pearly lawn,
The youthful, charming Chloe.

The feather'd people you might see
Perch'd all around on every tree,

---

* Burns wrote this song in compliment to Mrs. Burns during their honeymoon. The air, with many others of equal beauty, was the composition of a Mr. Marshall, who, in Burns's time, was butler to the Duke of Gordon.

This beautiful song—beautiful for both its amatory and its patriotic sentiment—seems to have been composed by Burns during the period when he was courting the lady who afterwards became his wife. The present generation is much interested in this lady, and deservedly; as, in addition to her poetical history, which is an extremely interesting one, she is a personage of the greatest private worth, and in every respect deserving to be esteemed as the widow of Scotland's best and most endeared bard. The following anecdote will perhaps be held as testifying, in no inconsiderable degree, to a quality which she may not hitherto have been supposed to possess—her wit.

It is generally known, that Mrs. Burns has, ever since her husband's death, occupied exactly the same house in Dumfries, which she inhabited before that event, and that it is customary for strangers, who happen to pass through or visit the town, to pay their respects to her, with or without letters of introduction, precisely as they do to the churchyard, the bridge, the harbour, or any other public object of curiosity about the place. A gay young English gentleman one day visited Mrs. Burns, and after he had seen all that she had to show—the bedroom in which the poet died, his original portrait by Nasmyth, his family-bible, with the names and birth-days of himself, his wife, and children, written on a blank-leaf by his own hand, and some other little trifles of the same nature—he proceeded to intreat that she would have the kindness to present him with some relic of the poet, which he might carry away with him, as a wonder, to show in his own country. "Indeed, Sir," said Mrs. Burns, "I have given away so many relics of Mr. Burns, that, to tell ye the truth, I have not one left."—"Oh, you must surely have something," said the persevering Saxon; "any thing will do—any little scrap of his handwriting—the least thing you please. All I want is *just a relic of the poet*; and any thing, you know, will do for a relic." Some further altercation took place, the lady reasserting that she had no relic to give, and he as repeatedly renewing his request. At length, fairly tired out with the man's importunities, Mrs. Burns said to him, with a smile, "'Deed, Sir, unless ye tak *mysell*, then, I dinna see how you are to get what you want; for, really, *I'm* the only *relic* o' him that I ken o'." The petitioner at once withdrew his request.

In notes of sweetest melody
They hail the charming Chloe;

'Till, painting gay the eastern skies,
The glorious sun began to rise,
Outrivall'd by the radiant eyes
Of youthful, charming Chloe.
Lovely was she, &c.

CHLORIS.

Tune—"My Lodging is on the Cold Ground."

My Chloris, mark how green the groves,
The primrose banks how fair;
The balmy gales awake the flowers,
And wave thy flaxen hair.

The lav'rock shuns the palace gay,
And o'er the cottage sings;
For nature smiles as sweet, I ween,
To shepherds as to kings.

Let minstrels sweep the skilfu' string
In lordly lechtit ha';
The shepherd stops his simple reed,
Blythe, in the birken shaw.

The princely revel may survey
Our rustic dance wi' scorn;
But are their hearts as light as ours,
Beneath the milk-white thorn?

The shepherd, in the flow'ry glen,
In shepherd's phrase will woo;
The courtier tells a fairer tale,
But is his heart as true?

These wild-wood flowers I've pu'd, to deck
That spotless breast of thine;
The courtier's gems may witness love,
But 'tis na love like mine.

CLARINDA.*

Clarinda, mistress of my soul,
The measur'd time is run!
The wretch beneath the dreary pole,
So marks his latest sun.

To what dark cave of frozen night
Shall poor Sylvander hie;
Depriv'd of thee, his life and light,
The sun of all his joy.

We part,—but by these precious drops,
That fill thy lovely eyes!
No other light shall guide my steps,
Till thy bright beams arise.

She, the fair sun of all her sex,
Has blest my glorious day:
And shall a glimmering planet fix
My worship to its ray?

CONTENTIT WI' LITTLE.

Tune—"Lumps o' Puddin."

Contentit wi' little, and cantie wi' mair,
Whene'er I forgather wi' sorrow and care,
I gie them a skelp, as they're creepin' alang,
Wi' a cogue o' gude swats and an auld Scottish sang.

I whiles claw the elbow o' troublesome thocht;
But man is a sodger, and life is a faucht:
My mirth and gude humour are coin in my pouch,
And my freedom's my lairdship nae monarch daur touch.

A towmond o' trouble, should that be my fa',
A nicht o' gude fellowship sowthers it a':
When at the blythe end o' our journey at last,
Wha the deil ever thinks o' the road he has past?

Blind chance, let her snapper and stoite on her way;
Be't to me, be't frae me, e'en let the jaud gae;
Come ease or come travail, come pleasure or pain,
My warst word is—Welcome, and welcome, a-gain!

COME, LET ME TAKE THEE TO MY BREAST.

Tune—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen."

Come, let me take thee to my breast,
And pledge we ne'er shall sunder;
And I shall spurn, as vilest dust,
The warld's wealth and grandeur:
And do I hear my Jeanie own,
That equal transports move her?
I ask for dearest life alone
That I may live to love her.

Thus in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure;
I'll seek nae mair o' heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure:
And, by thy een sae bonnie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever!
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never.

* The widow alluded to in the Life.

COUNTRY LASSIE.

In simmer when the hay was mawn,
And corn wav'd green in ilka field,
While claver blooms white o'er the lea,
And roses blaw in ilka bield;
Blythe Bessie in the milking shiel,
Says, I'll be wed come o't what will;
Out spake a dame in wrinkled eild,
O' gude advisement comes nae ill.

Its ye hae wooers mony a ane,
And, lassie, ye're but young, ye ken;
Then wait a wee, and cannie wale,
A routhie butt, a routhie ben:
There's Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
Fu' is his barn, fu' is his byre;
Tak this frae me, my bonnie hen,
It's plenty beets the luver's fire.

For Johnie o' the Buskie-glen,
I dinna care a single flie;
He lo'es sae weel his craps and kye,
He has nae luve to spare for me:
But blythe's the blink o' Robie's e'e,
And weel I wat he lo'es me dear:
Ae blink o' him I wad na gie
For Buskie-glen and a' his gear.

O thoughtless lassie, life's a faught,
The canniest gate, the strife is sair;
But aye fu' han't is fechtin' best,
A hungry care's an unco care:
But some will spend, and some will spare,
And wilfu' folk maun hae their will;
Syne as ye brew, my maiden fair,
Keep mind that ye maun drink the yill.

O gear will buy me rigs o' land,
And gear will buy me sheep and kye;
But the tender heart o' leesome luve,
The gowd and siller canna buy:
We may be poor, Robie and I,
Light is the burden luve lays on;
Content and love brings peace and joy,
What mair hae queens upon a throne?

DAINTIE DAVIE.

This song, tradition says, and the composition itself confirms it, was composed on the Rev. David Williamson's getting the daughter of Lady Cherrytrees with child, while a party of dragoons were searching her house to apprehend him for being an adherent to the solemn league and covenant.—The pious woman had put a lady's night-cap on him, and had laid him a-bed with her own daughter, and passed him to the soldiery as a lady, her daughter's bed-fellow.—A mutilated stanza or two are to be found in *Herd's collection*, but the original song consists of five or six stanzas, and were their *delicacy* equal to their *wit* and *humour*, they would merit a place in any collection.—The first stanza is,

Being pursued by a dragoon,
Within my bed he was laid down;
And well I wat he was worth his room,
For he was my daintie Davie.

DAINTY DAVIE.

Tune—"Dainty Davie."

Now rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay green birken bowers,
And now come in my happy hours,
To wander wi' my Davie.
Meet me on the warlock knowe,
Dainty Davie, dainty Davie;
There I'll spend the day wi' you,
My ain dear dainty Davie.

The crystal waters round us fa',
The merry birds are lovers a',
The scented breezes round us blaw,
A-wandering wi' my Davie.
Meet me on, &c.

When purple morning starts the hare,
To steal upon her early fare,
Then through the dews I will repair,
To meet my faithfu' Davie.
Meet me on, &c.

When day, expiring in the west,
The curtain draws o' Nature's rest,
I'll flee to his arms I lo'e best,
And that's my dainty Davie.
Meet me on, &c.

DELUDED SWAIN, THE PLEASURE.

Tune—"The Collier's Bonnie Lassie."

Deluded swain, the pleasure
The fickle fair can give thee
Is but a fairy treasure—
Thy hopes will soon deceive thee.

The billows on the ocean,
The breezes idly roaming,
The clouds' uncertain motion,
They are but types of woman.

O! art thou not ashamed
To doat upon a feature?
If man thou wouldst be named,
Despise the silly creature.

Go, find an honest fellow;
Good claret set before thee:
Hold on till thou art mellow;
And then to bed in glory.

DOES HAUGHTY GAUL.

Tune—"Push about the Jorum."

April, 1795.

Does haughty Gaul invasion threat?
Then let the loons beware, Sir,
There's wooden walls upon our seas,
And volunteers on shore, Sir.
The Nith shall run to Corsincon,*
And Criffel sink in Solway,†
Ere we permit a foreign foe
On British ground to rally!
Fall de rall, &c.

O let us not, like snarling tykes,
In wrangling be divided;
'Till slap come in an unco loon
And wi' a rung decide it.
Be Britain still to Britain true,
Amang oursels united;
For never but by British hands
Maun British wrangs be righted.
Fall de rall, &c.

The kettle o' the kirk and state,
Perhaps a clout may fail in't;
But deil a foreign tinkler loon
Shall ever ca' a nail in't.
Our fathers' bluid the kettle bought,
And wha wad dare to spoil it;
By heaven the sacrilegious dog
Shall fuel be to boil it.
Fall de rall, &c.

The wretch that wad a tyrant own,
And the wretch his true-born brother,
Who would set the *mob* aboon the *throne*,
May they be damned together!
Who will not sing "God save the king,"
Shall hang as high's the steeple;
But, while we sing "God save the king,"
We'll ne'er forget the people.
Fall de rall, &c.

DOWN THE BURN DAVIE.

VERSE ADDED BY BURNS TO THE OLD SONG.

As down the burn they took their way,
And through the flowery dale,
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was aye the tale.
With—Mary when shall we return,
Such pleasure to renew?
Quoth Mary, love, I like the burn,
And aye will follow you.

* A high hill at the source of the Nith.
† A well-known mountain at the mouth of the same river.

DUNCAN GRAY.

Dr. Blacklock informed me that he had often heard the tradition that this air was composed by a carman in Glasgow.

Duncan Gray cam here to woo,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
On blythe yule night when we were fou,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.
Maggie coost her head fu' high,
Look'd asklent and unco skeigh;
Gart poor Duncan stand abeigh;
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

Duncan fleech'd and Duncan pray'd:
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg was deaf as Ailsa Craig,*
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan sigh'd baith out and in,
Grat his e'en baith bleert and blin,
Spak o' lowpin o'er a linn;
Ha, ha, &c.

Time and chance are but a tide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Slighted love is sair to bide,
Ha, ha, &c.
Shall I, like a fool, quo' he,
For a haughty hizzie die;
She may gae to—France for me!
Ha, ha, &c.

How it comes let doctors tell,
Ha, ha, &c.
Meg grew sick—as he grew heal,
Ha, ha, &c.
Something in her bosom wrings,
For relief a sigh she brings;
And O, her een, they spak sic things!
Ha, ha, &c.

Duncan was a lad o' grace,
Ha, ha, &c.
Maggie's was a piteous case,
Ha, ha, &c.
Duncan could na be her death,
Swelling pity smoor'd his wrath;
Now they're crouse and canty baith,
Ha, ha, the wooing o't.

EVAN BANKS.

Slow spreads the gloom my soul desires,
The sun from India's shore retires;
To Evan banks, with temp'rate ray,
Home of my youth, it leads the day.
Oh! banks to me for ever dear!
Oh! stream whose murmurs still I hear!
All, all my hopes of bliss reside,
Where Evan mingles with the Clyde.

* A well-known rock in the Frith of Clyde.

And she, in simple beauty drest,
Whose image lives within my breast;
Who trembling heard my piercing sigh,
And long pursu'd me with her eye!
Does she, with heart unchang'd as mine,
Oft in the vocal bowers recline?
Or where yon grot o'erhangs the tide,
Muse while the Evan seeks the Clyde.

Ye lofty banks that Evan bound!
Ye lavish woods that wave around,
And o'er the stream your shadows throw,
Which sweetly winds so far below;
What secret charm to mem'ry brings,
All that on Evan's border springs?
Sweet banks! ye bloom by Mary's side:
Blest stream, she views thee haste to Clyde.

Can all the wealth of India's coast
Atone for years in absence lost?
Return, ye moments of delight,
With richer treasures bless my sight!
Swift from this desert let me part,
And fly to meet a kindred heart!
Nor more may aught my steps divide
From that dear stream which flows to Clyde.

FAIR ELIZA.

A GAELIC AIR.

Turn again, thou fair Eliza,
Ae kind blink before we part,
Rew on thy despairing lover!
Canst thou break his faithfu' heart!
Turn again, thou fair Eliza;
If to love thy heart denies,
For pity hide the cruel sentence
Under friendship's kind disguise!

Thee, dear maid, hae I offended?
The offence is loving thee:
Canst thou wreck his peace for ever,
Wha for thine wad gladly die!
While the life beats in my bosom,
Thou shalt mix in ilka throe:
Turn again, thou lovely maiden,
Ae sweet smile on me bestow.

Not the bee upon the blossom,
In the pride o' sinny noon;
Not the little sporting fairy,
All beneath the simmer moon;
Not the poet in the moment
Fancy lightens on his ee,
Kens the pleasure, feels the rapture
That thy presence gies to me.

FAIREST MAID ON DEVON BANKS.

Tune—"Rothiemurchie."

Fairest maid on Devon banks,
Crystal Devon, winding Devon,
Wilt thou lay that frown aside,
And smile as thou wert wont to do.

Full well thou knowest I love thee dear,
Couldst thou to malice lend an ear!
O did not love exclaim, "Forbear!
Nor use a faithful lover so."
Fairest maid, &c.

Then come, thou fairest of the fair,
Those wonted smiles, O let me share;
And by that beauteous self I swear,
No love but thine my heart shall know.
*Fairest maid, &c.**

FATE GAVE THE WORD.

Tune—"Finlayston House."

Fate gave the word, the arrow sped,
And pierced my darling's heart:
And with him all the joys are fled
Life can to me impart.
My cruel hands the sapling drops,
In dust dishonour'd laid:
So fell the pride of all my hopes,
My age's future shade.

The mother linnet in the brake
Bewails her ravished young;
So I for my lost darling's sake,
Lament the live-day long.
Death, oft I've fear'd thy fatal blow,
Now fond I bare my breast,
O do thou kindly lay me low
With him I love at rest!

FOR THE SAKE OF SOMEBODY.

My heart is sair, I dare nae tell,
My heart is sair for somebody;
I could wake a winter night
For the sake of somebody.
Oh-hon! for somebody!
Oh-hey! for somebody!

---

* These verses, and the letter enclosing them, are written in a character that marks the very feeble state of their author. Mr. Syme is of opinion that he could not have been in any danger of a jail at Dumfries, where certainly he had many firm friends, nor under any necessity of imploring aid from Edinburgh. But about this time his mind began to be at times unsettled, and the horrors of a jail perpetually haunted his imagination. He died on the 21st of this month.

I could range the world around,
For the sake of somebody.

Ye powers that smile on virtuous love,
O sweetly smile on somebody!
Frae ilka danger keep him free,
And send me safe my somebody.
Oh-hon! for somebody!
Oh-hey! for somebody!
I wad do—what wad I not,
For the sake of somebody!

FORLORN, MY LOVE.

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

Forlorn, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee I wander here;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe
At which I most repine, love.
O wert thou love, but near me,
But near, near, near me;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blasts each bud of hope and joy;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I,
Save in these arms of thine, love.
O wert, &c.

Cold, alter'd friendship's cruel part,
To poison fortune's ruthless dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.
O wert, &c.

But dreary tho' the moments fleet,
O let me think we yet shall meet!
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love.
O wert, &c.

FROM THEE, ELIZA.

Tune—"Gilderoy."

From thee, Eliza, I must go,
And from my native shore;
The cruel fates between us throw
A boundless ocean's roar:
But boundless oceans, roaring wide
Between my love and me,
They never, never can divide
My heart and soul from thee.

Farewell, farewell, Eliza dear,
The maid that I adore!
A boding voice is in mine ear,
We part to meet no mere.
But the last throb that leaves my heart,
While death stands victor by,
That throb, Eliza, is thy part,
And thine that latest sigh.*

GALA WATER.

Tune—"Gala Water."

There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander through the bluming heather;
But Yarrow braes, nor Ettrick shaws,
Can match the lads o' Gala Water.

But there is ane, a secret ane,
Abune them a' I loe him better;
And I'll be his, and he'll be mine,
The bonnie lad o' Gala Water.

Although his daddie was nae laird,
And though I hae na mickle tocher;
Yet rich in kindest, truest love,
We'll tent our flocks on Gala Water.

It ne'er was wealth, it ne'er was wealth,
That coft contentment, peace, or pleasure;
The bands and bliss o' mutual love,
O that's the chiefest warld's treasure!

GLOOMY DECEMBER.

Ance mair I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Ance mair I hail thee, wi' sorrow and care;
Sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, Oh! ne'er to meet mair.
Fond lovers parting is sweet painful pleasure,
Hope beaming mild on the soft parting hour;
But the dire feeling, *O farewell for ever*,
Is anguish unmingl'd and agony pure.

Wild as the winter now tearing the forest,
'Till the last leaf o' the summer is flown,
Such is the tempest has shaken my bosom,
Since my last hope and last comfort is gone;
Still as I hail thee, thou gloomy December,
Still shall I hail thee wi' sorrow and care;
For sad was the parting thou makes me remember,
Parting wi' Nancy, Oh, ne'er to meet mair.

---

* Miss Miller of Mauchline, (probably the same lady whom the poet has celebrated in his catalogue of the beauties of that village—

"Miss Miller is fine"——)

afterwards Mrs. Templeton, was the heroine of this beautiful song.

GREEN GROW THE RASHES:

A FRAGMENT.

Green grow the rashes, O!
Green grow the rashes, O!
The sweetest hours that e'er I spend,
Are spent amang the lasses, O!

THERE's nought but care on every han',
In every hour that passes, O;
What signifies the life o' man,
An' 'twere na for the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

The warly race may riches chase,
An' riches still may fly them, O;
An' though at last they catch them fast,
Their hearts can ne'er enjoy them, O.
Green grow, &c.

But gie me a canny hour at e'en,
My arms about my dearie, O;
An' warly cares, an' warly men,
May a gae tapsalteerie, O.
Green grow, &c.

For you so douse, ye sneer at this,
Ye're nought but senseless asses, O;
The wisest man the warld e'er saw,
He dearly loved the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

Auld nature swears, the lovely dears
Her noblest work she classes, O;
Her 'prentice han' she tried on man,
And then she made the lasses, O.
Green grow, &c.

. . . . . .

GUDEWIFE, COUNT THE LAWIN.

Tune—"Gudewife, count the Lawin."

GANE is the day, and mirk's the night;
But we'll ne'er stray for faut o' light;
For ale and brandy's stars and moon,
And blude-red wine's the rising sun.
Then, gudewife, count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin,
Then, gudewife, count the lawin,
And bring a coggie mair.

There's wealth and ease for gentlemen,
And semple folk maun fecht and fen;
But here we're a' in ae accord,
For ilka man that's drunk's a lord.
Then, gudewife, &c.

My coggie is a haly pool,
That heals the wounds o' care and dool;
And pleasure is a wanton trout—
An' ye drink but deep, ye'll find him out.
Then, gudewife, count the lawin,
The lawin, the lawin,
Then, gudewife, count the lawin,
And bring's a coggie mair.

HANDSOME NELL.

Tune—"I am a man unmarried."

O, ONCE I lov'd a bonnie lass,
Ay, and I love her still,
And whilst that virtue warms my breast,
I'll love my handsome Nell.
Tal lal de ral, &c.

As bonnie lasses I hae seen,
And mony full as braw,
But for a modest gracefu' mien
The like I never saw.
Tal lal de ral, &c.

A bonnie lass, I will confess,
Is pleasant to the ee,
But without some better qualities
She's no a lass for me.
Tal lal de ral, &c.

But Nelly's looks are blithe and sweet,
And what is best of a'
Her reputation was complete,
And fair without a flaw.
Tal lal de ral, &c.

She dresses aye sae clean and neat,
Both decent and genteel;
And then there's something in her gait
Gars ony dress look weel.
Tal lal de ral, &c.

A gaudy dress and gentle air
May slightly touch the heart,
But it's innocence and modesty
That polishes the dart.
Tal lal de ral, &c.

'Tis this in Nelly pleases me,
'Tis this enchants my soul;
For absolutely in my breast
She reigns without control.
Tal lal de ral, &c.

It must be confessed that these lines give no indication of the future genius of Burns; but he himself seems to have been fond of them, probably from the recollections they excited.

HAD I A CAVE.

Had I a cave on some wild distant shore,
Where the winds howl to the waves' dashing roar,
There would I weep my woes,
There seek my lost repose,
Till grief my eyes should close,
Ne'er to wake more.

Falsest of womankind, canst thou declare
All thy fond plighted vows—fleeting as air!
To thy new lover hie,
Laugh o'er thy perjury,
Then in thy bosom try
What peace is there.

Compare this with the old crambo-clink,—to the same air—

You're welcome to Paxton, young Robin Adair,
Your welcome, but asking, sweet Robin Adair.
How does Johnie Mackeral do?
Aye, and Luke Gardener too?
Come love me and never rue,
Robin Adair.

HIGHLAND HARRY.

My Harry was a gallant gay;
Fu' stately strode he on the plain;
But now he's banish'd far away,
I'll never see him back again.
Oh, for him back again!
Oh, for him back again!
I wad gie a' Knockhaspie's land
For Highland Harry back again.

When a' the lave gae to their bed,
I wander dowie up the glen;
I sit me down, and greet my fill,
And aye I wish him back again.
Oh, for him back again! &c.

Oh, were some villains hangit hie,
And ilka body had their ain,
Then I micht see the joyfu' sicht,
My Highland Harry back again.
Oh, for him back again! &c.

Sad was the day, and sad the hour,
He left me in his native plain,
And rush'd his much-wrong'd prince to join;
But, oh! he'll ne'er come back again!
Oh, for him back again! &c.

Strong was my Harry's arm in war,
Unmatch'd in a' Culloden's plain;
But vengeance marks him for her ain—
I'll never see him back again.*
Oh, for him back again! &c.

* The first three verses of this song, excepting the chorus, are by Burns. The air to which it is sung, is the Highlander's Farewell to Ireland, with some alterations, sung slowly.

HIGHLAND MARY.

Tune—"Katherine Ogie."

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around
The Castle o' Montgomery!*
Green be your woods, and fair your flow'rs,
Your waters never drumlie!
There simmer first unfauld her robes,
And there they langest tarry!
For there I took the last fareweel
O' my sweet Highland Mary.

How sweetly bloom'd the gay green birk!
How rich the hawthorn's blossom!
As, underneath their fragrant shade,
I clasp'd her to my bosom!
The golden hours, on angel wings,
Flew o'er me and my dearie;
For dear to me, as light and life,
Was my sweet Highland Mary.

Wi' monie a vow and lock'd embrace,
Our parting was fu' tender;
And, pledging aft to meet again,
We tore ourselves asunder:
But, oh! fell death's untimely frost,
That nipt my flower sae early!
Now green's the sod, and cauld's the clay,
That wraps my Highland Mary!

O pale, pale now, those rosy lips,
I aft hae kiss'd sae fondly!
And closed for aye the sparkling glance,
That dwelt on me sae kindly;
And mould'ring now in silent dust,
That heart that lo'ed me dearly!
But still within my bosom's core,
Shall live my Highland Mary.

HER FLOWING LOCKS:

A FRAGMENT.

Her flowing locks, the raven's wing,
Adown her neck and bosom hing;
How sweet unto that breast to cling,
And round that neck entwine her!

Her lips are roses wat wi' dew,
O, what a feast, her bonnie mou!
Her cheeks a mair celestial hue,
A crimson still diviner.

* Coilsfield House, near Mauchline; but poetically titled as above, on account of the name of the proprietor.

HERE'S, A BOTTLE AND AN HONEST FRIEND.

Here's, a bottle and an honest friend!
What wad ye wish for mair, man?
Wha kens, before his life may end,
What his share may be of care, man.
Then catch the moments as they fly,
And use them as ye ought, man:—
Believe me, happiness is shy,
And comes not ay when sought, man.

HERE'S A HEALTH TO THEM THAT'S AWA.

PATRIOTIC—UNFINISHED.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;
And wha winna wish gude luck to our cause,
May never gude luck be their fa'!
It's gude to be merry and wise,
It's gude to be honest and true,
It's gude to support Caledonia's cause,
And bide by the buff and the blue.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa;
Here's a health to Charlie, the chief o' the clan,
Altho' that his band be sma'.
May liberty meet wi' success!
May prudence protect her frae evil!
May tyrants and tyranny tine in the mist,
And wander their way to the devil!

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to Tammie, the Norland laddie,
That lives at the lug of the law!
Here's freedom to him that wad read,
Here's freedom to him that wad write!
There's nane ever fear'd that the truth should be heard,
But they wham the truth would indite.

Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's a health to them that's awa,
Here's Chieftain M'Leod, a Chieftain worth gowd,
Tho' bred amang mountains o' snaw!

. . . . . .

HERE'S A HEALTH TO ANE I LO'E DEAR.

Tune—"Here's a Health to them that's awa."

Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear—
Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear;
Thou art sweet as the smile when kind lovers meet,
And soft as their parting tear, Jessie!

Although thou maun never be mine—
Although even hope is denied—
'Tis sweeter for thee despairing
Than aught in the world beside, Jessie!

I mourn through the gay gaudy day,
As hopeless I muse on thy charms;
But welcome the dream o' sweet slumber,
For then I am lock'd in thy arms, Jessie!

I guess by the dear angel smile,
I guess by the love-rolling ee;
But why urge the tender confession,
'Gainst fortune's fell cruel decree, Jessie!*

HOW CRUEL ARE THE PARENTS.

ALTERED FROM AN OLD ENGLISH SONG.

Tune—"John Anderson my jo."

How cruel are the parents
Who riches only prize,
And to the wealthy booby,
Poor woman sacrifice.
Meanwhile the hapless daughter
Has but a choice of strife;
To shun a tyrant father's hate,
Become a wretched wife.

The ravening hawk pursuing,
The trembling dove thus flies,
To shun impelling ruin
A while her pinions tries;
'Till of escape despairing,
No shelter or retreat,
She trusts the ruthless falconer,
And drops beneath his feet.

HOW LANG AND DREARY IS THE NIGHT.

Tune—"Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.

How lang and dreary is the night,
When I am frae my dearie;
I restless lie frae e'en to morn,
Though I were ne'er sae weary.

For, oh, her lanely nights are lang,
And, oh, her dreams are eerie,
And, oh, her widow'd heart is sair,
That's absent frae her dearie.

* Written upon Miss Lewars, now Mrs. Thomson, of Dumfries; a true friend and a great favourite of the poet, and, at his death, one of the most sympathizing friends of his afflicted widow.

When I think on the lightsome days
I spent wi' thee, my dearie;
And now what seas between us roar,
How can I but be eerie?
For, oh, &c.

How slow ye move, ye heavy hours;
The joyless day how dreary!
It wasna sae ye glinted by,
When I was wi' my dearie.
For, oh, &c.

I AM A SON OF MARS.

Tune—"Soldier's Joy."

I AM a son of Mars who have been in many wars,
And show my cuts and scars wherever I come;
This here was for a wench, and that other in a trench,
When welcoming the French at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

My 'prenticeship I past where my leader breath'd his last,
When the bloody die was cast on the heights of Abram;
I served out my trade when the gallant game was play'd,
And the Moro low was laid at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

I lastly was with Curtis, among the floating batt'ries,
And there I left for witness an arm and a limb;
Yet let my country need me, with Elliot to head me,
I'd clatter my stumps at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

And now tho' I must beg with a wooden arm and leg,
And many a tatter'd rag hanging over my bum,
I'm as happy with my wallet, my bottle and my callet,
As when I us'd in scarlet to follow a drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

What tho' with hoary locks, I must stand the winter shocks,
Beneath the woods and rocks often times for a home,
When the tother bag I sell, and the tother bottle tell,
I could meet a troop of hell at the sound of the drum.
Lal de daudle, &c.

I DREAM'D I LAY WHERE FLOWERS WERE SPRINGING.

THESE two stanzas I composed when I was seventeen, and are among the oldest of my printed pieces.

I DREAM'D I lay where flowers were springing,
Gaily in the sunny beam;
List'ning to the wild birds singing,
By a falling, crystal stream:
Straight the sky grew black and daring;
Thro' the woods the whirlwinds rave;
Trees with aged arms were warring,
O'er the swelling, drumlie wave.

Such was my life's deceitful morning,
Such the pleasures I enjoy'd;
But lang or noon, loud tempests storming,
A' my flow'ry bliss destroy'd.
Tho' fickle fortune has deceiv'd me,
She promis'd fair, and perform'd but ill;
Of mony a joy and hope bereav'd me,
I bear a heart shall support me still.

I'LL AYE CA' IN BY YON TOUN.

Tune—"I'll gang nae mair to yon town."

I'LL aye ca' in by yon toun,
And by yon garden green again;
I'll aye ca' in by yon toun,
And see my bonnie Jean again.

There's nane shall ken, there's nane shall guss
What brings me back the gate again,
But she, my fairest faithfu' lass;
And stowlins we shall meet again.

She'll wander by the aiken tree,
When trystin time draws near again;
And when her lovely form I see,
O haith, she's doubly dear again.

I'll aye ca' in by yon toun,
And by yon garden green again;
I'll aye ca' in by yon toun,
And see my bonnie Jean again.

I'M O'ER YOUNG TO MARRY YET.

THE chorus is old:—the rest of it, such as it is, is mine.

I'M my mammy's ae bairn,
Wi' unco folk, I weary, Sir;
And lying in a man's bed,
I'm fley'd wad mak me irie, Sir.
I'm o'er young, I'm o'er young,
I'm o'er young to marry yet;

I'm o'er young, twad be a sin
To tak me frae my mammy yet.

Hallowmas is come and gane,
The nights are lang in winter, Sir;
And you and I in ae bed,
In trowth I darena venture, Sir.
I'm o'er young, &c.

My minnie coft me a new gown,
The kirk maun hae the gracing o't;
War I to lie wi' you, kind Sir,
I'm fear'd ye'd spoil the lacing o't.
I'm o'er young, &c.

Fu' loud and shrill the frosty wind
Blaws thro' the leafless timmer, Sir;
But should ye come this gate again,
I'll aulder be gin simmer, Sir.
I'm o'er young, &c.

IT IS NA, JEAN, THY BONNIE FACE.

These were originally English verses:—I gave them their Scotch dress.

It is na, Jean, thy bonnie face,
Nor shape that I admire,
Altho' thy beauty and thy grace
Might weel awauk desire.
Something in ilka part o' thee
To praise, to love, I find;
But dear as is thy form to me,
Still dearer is thy mind.

Nae mair ungen'rous wish I hae,
Nor stronger in my breast,
Than, if I canna mak thee sae,
At least to see thee blest.
Content am I, if heaven shall give
But happiness to thee:
And as wi' thee I'd wish to live,
For thee I'd bear to die.

JAMIE, COME TRY ME.

Jamie, come try me,
Jamie, come try me;
If ye wad win my love,
Can ye na try me?
If ye should ask my love,
Could I deny thee?
If ye wad win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

My heart leaps light, my love,
When ye come nigh me;
If I had wings, my love,
Think na I'd fly thee.
If ye wad woo me, love,
Wha can espy thee?
I'm far aboon fortune, love,
When I am by thee.

I come from my chamber
When the moon's glowing;
I walk by the streamlet
'Mang the broom flowing.
The bright moon and stars, love—
None else espy me;
And if ye wad win my love,
Jamie, come try me.

JOCKIE'S TA'EN THE PARTING KISS.

Jockie's ta'en the parting kiss,
Ower the mountains he is gane;
And with him is a' my bliss;
Nought but griefs wi' me remain.
Spare my love, ye winds that blaw,
Plashy sleets, and beating rain!
Spare my love, thou feathery snaw,
Drifting o'er the frozen plain!

When the shades of evening creep
Ower the day's fair gladsome ee,
Sound and safely may he sleep,
Sweetly blythe his waukening be!
He will think on her he loves,
Fondly he'll repeat her name;
For, where'er he distant roves,
Jockie's heart is still at hame.

JOHN BARLEYCORN. *

A BALLAD.

There were three kings into the east,
Three kings both great and high,
An' they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn should die.

They took a plough and plough'd him down,
Put clods upon his head,
And they hae sworn a solemn oath
John Barleycorn was dead.

But the cheerful spring came kindly on,
And show'rs began to fall;
John Barleycorn got up again,
And sore surpris'd them all.

The sultry suns of summer came,
And he grew thick and strong,
His head weel arm'd wi' pointed spears,
That no one should him wrong.

* This is partly composed on the plan of an old song known by the same name.

The sober autumn enter'd mild,
When he grew wan and pale;
His bending joints and drooping head
Show'd he began to fail.

His colour sicken'd more and more,
He faded into age;
And then his enemies began
To show their deadly rage.

They've ta'en a weapon long and sharp,
And cut him by the knee;
Then ty'd him fast upon a cart,
Like a rogue for forgerie.

They laid him down upon his back,
And cudgell'd him full sore;
They hung him up before the storm,
And turn'd him o'er and o'er.

They filled up a darksome pit
With water to the brim,
They heaved in John Barleycorn,
There let him sink or swim.

They laid him out upon the floor,
To work him farther woe,
And still as signs of life appear'd,
They toss'd him to and fro.

They wasted o'er a scorching flame,
The marrow of his bones;
But a miller used him worst of all,
For he crush'd him between two stones.

And they hae ta'en his very heart's blood
And drank it round and round;
And still the more and more they drank,
Their joy did more abound.

John Barleycorn was a hero bold,
Of noble enterprise,
For if you do but taste his blood,
'Twill make your courage rise.

'Twill make a man forget his woe;
'Twill heighten all his joy:
'Twill make the widow's heart to sing,
Tho' the tear were in her eye.

Then let us toast John Barleycorn,
Each man a glass in hand;
And may his great posterity
Ne'er fail in old Scotland!

JOHN ANDERSON, MY JO, IMPROVED.

John Anderson, my jo, John, I wonder what you mean,
To rise so soon in the morning, and sit up so late at e'en,
Ye'll blear out a' your een, John, and why should you do so,
Gang sooner to your bed at e'en, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, when nature first began
To try her canny hand, John, her master-work was man;
And you amang them a', John, sae trig frae tap to toe,
She proved to be nae journey-work, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, ye were my first conceit,
And ye na think it strange, John, tho' I ca' ye trim and neat;
Tho' some folk say ye're auld, John, I never think ye so,
But I think ye're ave the same to me, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, we've seen our bairns' bairns,
And yet, my dear John Anderson, I'm happy in your arms,
And sae are ye in mine, John—I'm sure ye'll ne'er say no,
Tho' the days are gane, that we have seen, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, what pleasure does it gie
To see sae mony sprouts, John, spring up 'tween you and me,
And ilka lad and lass, John, in our footsteps to go,
Makes perfect heaven here on earth, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, when we were first acquaint,
Your locks were like the raven, your bonnie brow was brent,
But now your head's turned bald, John, your locks are like the snaw,
Yet blessings on your frosty pow, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, frae year to year we've past,
And soon that year maun come, John, will bring us to our last:
But let nae that affright us, John, our hearts were ne'er our foe,
While in innocent delight we lived, John Anderson, my jo.

John Anderson, my jo, John, we clam the hill thegither,
And mony a canty day, John, we've had wi' ane anither;

Now we maun totter down, John, but hand in hand we'll go,
And we'll sleep thegither at the foot, John Anderson, my jo.

LAST MAY A BRAW WOOER.

Tune—"The Lothian Lassie."

Last May a braw wooer cam' down the lang glen,
And sair wi' his love he did deave me;
I said there was naething I hated like men:
The deuce gae wi' him to believe me, believe me,
The deuce gae wi' him to believe me!

He spak' o' the darts o' my bonnie black een,
And vow'd for my love he was deein'.
I said he micht dee when he liked for Jean;
The guid forgi'e me for leein', for leein',
The guid forgi'e me for leein'!

A weel-stockit mailin', himsell for the laird,
And marriage aff-hand, were his proffer.
I never loot on that I kenn'd it or cared;
But thocht I might hae a waur offer, waur offer,
But thought I might hae a waur offer.

But, what wad ye think, in a fortnicht or less,—
The deil's in his taste to gang near her!—
He up the lang loan to my black cousin Bess—
Guess ye how, the jaud! I could bear her, could bear her,
Guess ye how, the jaud! I could bear her!

But a' the neist week, as I fretted wi' care,
I gaed to the tryst o' Dalgarnock;
And wha but my braw fickle wooer was there?
Wha glowr'd as he had seen a warlock, a warlock,
Wha glowr'd as he had seen a warlock.

Out ower my left shouther I gi'ed him a blink,
Lest neebors micht say I was saucy;
My wooer he caper'd as he'd been in drink,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie, dear lassie,
And vow'd I was his dear lassie.

I speir'd for my cousin, fou couthie and sweet,
Gin she had recover'd her hearin'?
And how my auld shoon fitted her shauchled feet?*
Gude sauf us! how he fell a-swearin', a-swearin',
Gude sauf us! how he fell a-swearin'.

He begged, for gudesake! I wad be his wife,
Or else I wad kill him wi' sorrow;
Sae, e'en to preserve the puir body in life,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow, to-morrow,
I think I maun wed him to-morrow.

LASSIE WI' THE LINT-WHITE LOCKS.

Tune—"Rothiemurchus' Rant."

Lassie wi' the lint white locks,
Bonnie lassie, artless lassie,
Wilt thou wi' me tend the flocks?
Wilt thou be my dearie, O?

Now Nature cleads the flowery lea,
And a' is young and sweet like thee,
O, wilt thou share its joys wi' me,
And say thou'lt be my dearie, O?
Lassie wi', &c.

And when the welcome simmer shower
Has cheer'd ilk drooping little flower,
We'll to the breathing woodbine bower,
At sultry noon, my dearie, O.
Lassie wi', &c.

When Cynthia lights, wi' silver ray,
The weary shearer's hameward way,
Through yellow-waving fields we'll stray,
And talk o' love, my dearie, O.
Lassie, wi', &c.

And when the howling wintry blast
Disturbs my lassie's midnight rest,
Enclasped to my faithful breast,
I'll comfort thee, my dearie, O.
Lassie, wi', &c.

LAY THY LOOF IN MINE, LASS

Tune—"O lay the loof in mine, lass."

O lay thy loof in mine, lass,
In mine, lass, in mine, lass;
And swear on thy white hand, lass,
That thou wilt be my ain.

A slave to love's unbounded sway,
He aft has wrought me muckle wae;
But now he is my deadly fae,
Unless thou be my ain.

There's mony a lass has broke my rest,
That for a blink I hae lo'ed best;
But thou art queen within my breast,
For ever to remain.

---

* In Scotland, when a cast-off lover pays his addresses to a new mistress, that new mistress is said to have got the auld shoon (old shoes) of the former one. Here the metaphor is made to carry an extremely ingenious sarcasm at the clumsiness of the new mistress's person.

LET NOT WOMAN E'ER COMPLAIN.

Tune—"Duncan Gray."

Let not woman e'er complain
Of inconstancy in love;
Let not woman e'er complain,
Fickle man is apt to rove.

Look abroad through nature's range,
Nature's mighty law is change;
Ladies, would it not be strange,
Man should, then, a monster prove?

Mark the winds, and mark the skies;
Ocean's ebb, and ocean's flow.
Sun and moon but set to rise;
Round and round the seasons go.

Why, then, ask of silly man,
To oppose great nature's plan?
We'll be constant while we can,
You can be no more, you know.

LONG, LONG THE NIGHT.

Tune—"Aye wakin'."

Long, long the night,
Heavy comes the morrow,
While my soul's delight,
Is on her bed of sorrow.

Can I cease to care,
Can I cease to languish,
While my darling fair
Is on the couch of anguish?
Long, &c.

Every hope is fled,
Every fear is terror:
Slumber e'en I dread,
Every dream is horror.
Long, &c.

Hear me, pow'rs divine!
Oh, in pity hear me!
Take aught else of mine,
But my Chloris spare me!
Long, &c.

LOGAN BRAES.

Tune—"Logan Water."

O, Logan sweetly didst thou glide,
That day I was my Willie's bride;
And years sinsyne hae o'er us run,
Like Logan to the simmer sun.
But now the flowery banks appear
Like drumlie winter, dark an drear,
While my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes.

Again the merry month o' May,
Has made our hills and valleys gay;
The birds rejoice in leafy bowers,
The bees hum round the breathing flowers:
Blythe morning lifts his rosy eye,
And evening's tears are tears of joy:
My soul, delightless, a' surveys,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

Within yon milk-white hawthorn bush,
Amang her nestlings sits the thrush:
Her faithfu' mate will share her toil,
Or wi' his song her cares beguile;
But I, wi' my sweet nurslings here,
Nae mate to help, nae mate to cheer,
Pass widow'd nights and joyless days,
While Willie's far frae Logan braes.

O wae upon you, men o' state,
That brethren rouse to deadly hate!
As ye make mony a fond heart mourn,
Sae may it on your heads return!
How can your flinty hearts enjoy,
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry;*
But soon may peace bring happy days,
And Willie, hame to Logan braes!

LORD GREGORY.

Oh, mirk, mirk is this midnight hour,
And loud the tempests roar;
A waefu' wanderer seeks thy tower,
Lord Gregory, ope thy door!

An exile frae her father's ha',
And a' for loving thee;
At least some pity on me shaw,
If love it may na be.

Lord Gregory, mind'st thou not the grove
By bonnie Irvine side,
Where first I own'd that virgin love
I lang lang had denied?

How aften didst thou pledge the vow,
Thou wad for aye be mine!
And my fond heart, itsell sae true,
It ne'er mistrusted thine.

Hard is thy heart, Lord Gregory,
And flinty is thy breast!
Thou dart of heaven that flashes by,
Oh, wilt thou give me rest!

Ye mustering thunders from above,
Your willing victim see;

---

* Originally,

"Ye mind na 'mid your cruel joys,
"The widow's tears, the orphan's cries."

But spare and pardon my false love
His wrongs to heaven and me!*

LINES ON LORD DAER.

This wot ye all whom it concerns,
I, Rhymer Robin, alias Burns,
October twenty-third,
A ne'er-to-be-forgotten day,
Sae far I sprackled† up the brae,
I dinner'd wi' a Lord.

I've been at drunken *writers'*‡ feasts,
Nay, been bitch fou 'mang godly priests,
Wi' rev'rence be it spoken;
I've even join'd the honour'd jorum,
When mighty Squireships of the quorum,
Their hydra drouth did sloken.

But wi' a Lord—stand out my shin,
A Lord—a Peer—an Earl's son,
Up higher yet my bonnet;
An' sic a Lord—lang Scotch ells twa,
Our peerage he o'erlooks them a'
As I look o'er a sonnet.

But O for Hogarth's magic power!
To show Sir Bardy's willyart glowr,§
And how he stared and stammer'd,
Whan goavan‖ as if led wi' branks,¶
An' stumpan on his ploughman shanks,
He in the parlour hammer'd.

. . . . . .

I sidling shelter'd in a nook,
An' at his Lordship steal't a look,
Like some portentous omen;
Except good sense and social glee,
An' (what surprised me) modesty,
I marked nought uncommon.

I watch'd the symptoms o' the Great,
The gentle pride, the lordly state
The arrogant assuming;
The fient a pride, nae pride had he,
Nor sauce, nor state that I could see,
Mair than an honest ploughman.

Then from his Lordship I shall learn,
Hencefortn to meet with unconcern,
One rank as well's another;
Nae *honest worthy* man need care,
To meet with noble youthful Daer,
For he but meets a brother.

These lines will be read with no common interest by all who remember the unaffected simplicity of appearance, the sweetness of countenance and manners, and the unsuspecting benevolence of heart, of Basil, Lord Daer.—It was a younger brother of his who, as Earl of Selkirk, became so well known as the advocate of voluntary emigration, and who settled the colony upon the Red River.

* This song was composed upon the subject of the well-known and very beautiful ballad, entitled "The Lass of Lochroyan."

† Clambered. ‡ Attorneys.
§ Frightened stare. ‖ Walking stupidly.
¶ A kind of bridle.

MACPHERSON'S FAREWELL.

Tune—"Macpherson's Rant."

Farewell, ye prisons dark and strong,
The wretch's destinie!
Macpherson's time will not be long
On yonder gallows tree!
Sae rantingly, sae wantonly,
Sae dantonly gaed he,
He play'd a spring, and danced it round,
Beneath the gallows tree!

Oh, what is death, but parting breath?
On mony a bluidy plain
I've daur'd his face, and in this place
I scorn him yet again.
Sae rantingly, &c.

Untie these bands frae aff my hands,
And bring to me my sword;
And there's nae man in a' Scotland
But I'll brave him at a word.
Sae rantingly, &c.

I've lived a life of sturt and strife;
I die by treacherie:
It burns my heart I must depart,
And not avenged be.
Sae rantingly, &c.

Now farewell, light, thou sunshine bright,
And all beneath the sky!
May coward shame distain his name,
The wretch that dares not die!
Sae rantingly, &c.

MARIA'S DWELLING.

Tune—"The last time I cam o'er the Moor."

Farewell thou stream that winding flows
Around Maria's dwelling!
Ah cruel mem'ry! spare the throes
Within my bosom swelling:
Condemn'd to drag a hopeless chain,
And still in secret languish;
To feel a fire in ev'ry vein,
Yet dare not speek my anguish.

The wretch of love, unseen, unknown,
I fain my crime would cover:

The bursting sigh, th' unweeting groan
Betray the hopeless lover.
I know my doom must be despair,
Thou wilt, nor canst relieve me;
But oh, Maria, hear one prayer,
For pity's sake forgive me.

The music of thy tongue I heard,
Nor wist while it enslav'd me;
I saw thine eyes, yet nothing fear'd,
'Till fears no more had saved me.
The unwary sailor thus aghast,
The wheeling torrent viewing;
'Mid circling horrors yields at last
To overwhelming ruin.

MARK YONDER POMP.

Tune—"Deil tak' the wars."

Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion,
Round the wealthy, titled bride:
But when compared with real passion,
Poor is all that princely pride.
What are their showy treasures?
What are their noisy pleasures?
The gay, gaudy glare of vanity and art.
The polish'd jewel's blaze,
May draw the wond'ring gaze,
And courtly grandeur bright,
The fancy may delight,
But never, never can come near the heart.

But did you see my dearest Chloris,
In simplicity's array;
Lovely as yonder sweet opening flower is,
Shrinking from the gaze of day.
O then the heart alarming,
And all resistless charming,
In Love's delightful fetters she chains the willing soul!
Ambition would disown
The world's imperial crown,
Even Av'rice would deny
His worshipp'd deity,
And feel thro' every vein Love's raptures roll.

MARY MORISON.

Tune—"Bide ye yet."

O, Mary, at thy window be;
It is the wished, the trysted hour:
Those smiles and glances let me see
That make the miser's treasure poor.
How blythely wad I byde the stoure,
A weary slave frae sun to sun,
Could I the rich reward secure,
The lovely Mary Morison!

Yestreen, when to the stented string
The dance gaed through the lichtit ha',
To thee my fancy took its wing—
I sat, but neither heard nor saw.
Though this was fair, and that was braw,
And you the toast o' a' the town,
I sigh'd, and said amang them a',
Ye are na Mary Morison.

O, Mary, canst thou wreck his peace,
Wha for thy sake wad gladly dee?
Or canst thou break that heart of his,
Whase only faut is loving thee?
If love for love thou wilt na gie,
At least be pity to me shown;
A thocht ungentle canna be
The thocht of Mary Morison.

MEG O' THE MILL.

Tune—"O bonnie lass, will you lie in a barrack."

O, ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten,
An' ken ye what Meg o' the Mill has gotten?
She has gotten a coof wi' a claut o' siller,
And broken the heart o' the barley miller.

The miller was strappin', the miller was ruddy;
A heart like a lord, and a hue like a lady:
The laird was a wuddiefu' bleerit knurl;
She's left the guid fallow, and ta'en the churl.

The miller he hecht her a heart leal and loving:
The laird did address her wi' matter mair moving;
A fine pacing-horse wi' a clear-chain'd bridle,
A whip by her side, and a bonny side-saddle.

O wae on the siller, it's sae prevailing;
And wae on the love that's fix'd on a mailin'!
A tocher's nae word in a true lover's parle.
But, Gie me my love, and a fig for the warl!

MUSING ON THE ROARING OCEAN.

I composed these verses out of compliment to a Mrs. M'Lachlan, whose husband is an officer in the East Indies.

Tune—"Drumion Dubh."

Musing on the roaring ocean,
Which divides my love and me;
Wearying heaven in warm devotion,
For his weal where'er he be.

Hope and fear's alternate billow
Yielding late to nature's law,
Whispring spirits round my pillow,
Talk of him that's far awa.

Ye whom sorrow never wounded,
Ye who never shed a tear,

Care-untroubled, joy-surrounded,
Gaudy day to you is dear.

Gentle night, do thou befriend me,
Downy sleep the curtain draw;
Spirits kind, again attend me,
Talk of him that's far awa!

MY BONNIE MARY.

This air is Oswald's; the first half-stanza of the song is old, *the rest mine.**

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie;
That I may drink before I go,
A service to my bonnie lassie;
The boat rocks at the pier o' Leith;
Fu' loud the wind blaws frae the ferry;
The ship rides by the Berwick-law,
And I maun lea'e my bonnie Mary.

The trumpets sound, the banners fly,
The glittering spears are ranked ready;
The shouts o' war are heard afar,
The battle closes thick and bloody;
But it's not the roar o' sea or shore
Wad make me langer wish to tarry;
Nor shouts o' war that's heard afar,
It's leaving thee, my bonnie Mary.

MY HEART'S IN THE HIGHLANDS.

My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here—
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer;
A-chasing the wild deer, and following the roe,
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.
Farewell to the Highlands, farewell to the North,
The birth-place of valour, the country of worth;
Wherever I wander, wherever I rove,
The hills of the Highlands for ever I love.

Farewell to the mountains high cover'd with snow;
Farewell to the straths and green valleys below;
Farewell to the forests and wild hanging woods;
Farewell to the torrents and loud-pouring floods.
My heart's in the Highlands, my heart is not here;
My heart's in the Highlands a-chasing the deer,
Chasing the wild deer and following the roe—
My heart's in the Highlands wherever I go.

* This song, which Burns here acknowledges to be his own, was first introduced by him in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, as two *old stanzas.*

MY LADY'S GOWN THERE'S GAIRS UPON'T.

My lady's gown there's gairs upon't,
And gowden flowers sae rare upon't;
But Jenny's jimps and jirkinet,
My lord thinks muckle mair upon't.

My lord a-hunting he is gane,
But hounds or hawks wi' him are nane;
By Colin's cottage lies his game,
If Colin's Jenny be at hame.

My lady's white, my lady's red,
And kith and kin o' Cassilis' blude,
But her ten-pund lands o' tocher gude
Were a' the charms his lordship lo'ed.

Out o'er yon moor, out o'er yon moss,
Whare gor-cocks through the heather pass;
There wons auld Colin's bonny lass,
A lily in a wilderness.

Sae sweetly move her genty limbs,
Like music notes o' lover's hymns:
The diamond dew is her een sae blue,
Where laughing love sae wanton swims.

My lady's dink, my lady's drest,
The flower and fancy o' the west;
But the lassie that man lo'es the best,
O that's the lass to mak him blest.

MY NANNIE'S AWA.

Tune—"There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame."

Now in her green mantle blythe nature arrays,
And listens the lambkins that bleat ower the braes,
While birds warble welcome in ilka green shaw;
But to me it's delightless—my Nannie's awa.

The snaw-drap and primrose our woodlands adorn,
And violets bathe in the weet o' the morn;
They pain my sad bosom, sae sweetly they blaw!
They mind me o' Nannie—and Nannie's awa.

Thou laverock, that springs frae the dews of the lawn,
The shepherd to warn of the grey-breaking dawn;
And thou mellow mavis, that hails the night-fa';
Give over for pity—my Nannie's awa.

Come, autumn, sae pensive, in yellow and grey,
And soothe me wi' tidings o' nature's decay:
The dark, dreary winter, and wild-driving snaw,
Alane can delight me—my Nannie's awa.

MY NANNIE, O.

Tune—"My Nannie, O."

Behind yon hills where Stinchar flows,
Mang moors an' mosses many, O,
The wintry sun the day has clos'd,
And I'll awa to Nannie, O.
The westland wind blaws loud an' shrill;
The night's baith mirk and rainy, O;
But I'll get my plaid and out I'll steal,
An' owre the hills to Nannie, O.

My Nannie's charming, sweet, an' young;
Na' artfu' wiles to win ye, O;
May ill befa' the flattering tongue
That wad beguile my Nannie, O.
Her face is fair, her heart is true,
As spotless as she's bonnie, O:
The opening gowan, wet wi' dew,
Nae purer is than Nannie, O.

A country lad is my degree,
An' few there be that ken me, O;
But what care I how few they be,
I'm welcome aye to Nannie, O.
My riches a' 's my penny-fee,
An' I maun guide it cannie, O;
But warl's gear ne'er troubles me,
My thoughts are a' my Nannie, O.

Our auld Guidman delights to view
His sheep an' kye thrive bonnie, O;
But I'm as blythe that hauds his pleugh,
An' has nae care but Nannie, O.
Come weel, come woe, I care na by,
I'll take what Heaven will sen' me, O;
Nae ither care in life hae I,
But live, an' love my Nannie, O.

MY PEGGY'S FACE.

My Peggy's face, my Peggy's form
The frost of Hermit age might warm;
My Peggy's worth, my Peggy's mind,
Might charm the first of human kind:
I love my Peggy's angel air,
Her face so truly, heavenly fair,
Her native grace so void of art,
But I adore my Peggy's heart.

The lily's hue, the rose's dye,
The kindling lustre of an eye;
Who but owns their magic sway,
Who but knows they all decay!
The tender thrill, the pitying tear,
The generous purpose, nobly dear,
The gentle look, that rage disarms,
These are all immortal charms.

MY SODGER LADDIE,

THE SOLDIER'S DOXY'S SONG IN "THE JOLLY BEGGARS."

Tune—"Sodger Laddie."

I once was a maid, tho' I canna tell when,
And still my delight is in proper young men;
Some one of a troop of dragoons was my daddie,—
No wonder I'm fond of a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

The first of my loves was a swaggering blade,
To rattle the thundering drum was his trade;
His leg was so tight, and his cheek was so ruddy,
Transported I was with my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the godly old chaplain left him in the lurch,
The sword I forsook for the sake of the church,
He ventur'd the *soul*, and I risked the *body*,
'Twas then I prov'd false to my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

Full soon I grew sick of my sanctified sot,
The regiment at large for a husband I got;
From the gilded spontoon to the fife I was ready,
I asked no more but a sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

But the peace it reduc'd me to beg in despair,
Till I met my old boy at Cunningham fair;
His *rag regimental* they flutter'd so gaudy,
My heart it rejoic'd at my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

And now I have liv'd—I know not how long,
And still I can join in a cup or a song;
But whilst with both hands I can hold the glass steady,
Here's to thee, my hero, my sodger laddie.
Sing, Lal de lal, &c.

MY SPOUSE NANCIE.

Tune—"My Jo, Janet."

Husband, husband, cease your strife,
Nor longer idly rave, Sir;
Though I am your wedded wife,
Yet I'm not your slave, Sir.

One of two must still obey,
Nancie, Nancie;
Is it man or woman, say,
My spouse Nancie?

If 'tis still the lordly word,
Service and obedience;
I'll desert my sovereign lord,
And so good-bye allegiance!

Sad will I be so bereft,
Nancie, Nancie;

Yet I'll try to make a shift,
My spouse Nancie.

My poor heart then break it must,
My last hour I'm near it;
When you lay me in the dust,
Think—think how you will bear it.

I will hope and trust in Heaven,
Nancie, Nancie,
Strength to bear it will be given,
My spouse Nancie.

Well, Sir, from the silent dead,
Still I'll try to daunt you;
Ever round your midnight bed
Horrid sprites shall haunt you.

I'll wed another like my dear
Nancie, Nancie;
Then all hell will fly for fear,
My spouse Nancie!

MY TOCHER'S THE JEWEL.

O MEIKLE thinks my luve o' my beauty,
And meikle thinks my luve o' my kin;
But little thinks my luve I ken brawlie,
My tocher's the jewel has charms for him.
It's a' for the apple he'll nourish the tree;
It's a' for the hinney he'll cherish the bee,
My laddie's sae meikle in luve wi' the siller,
He canna hae luve to spare for me.

Your proffer o' luve's an arle penny,
My tocher's the bargain ye wad buy;
But an' ye be crafty, I am cunnin,
Sae ye wi' anither your fortune maun try.
Ye're like to the timmer o' yon rotten wood,
Ye're like to the bark o' yon rotten tree,
Ye'll slip frae me like a knotless thread,
And ye'll crack your credit wi' mae nor me.

MY WIFE'S A WINSOME WEE THING.

Tune—"My wife's a wanton wee thing."

SHE is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine!

I never saw a fairer,
I never loo'd a dearer;
And neist my heart I'll wear her,
For fear my jewel tine.

She is a winsome wee thing,
She is a handsome wee thing,
She is a bonnie wee thing,
This sweet wee wife o' mine.

The warld's wrack we share o't,
The warstle and the care o't;
W' her I'll blythely bear it,
And think my lot divine.

NAE-BODY.

I HAE a wife o' my ain,
I'll partake wi' nae-body;
I'll tak cuckold frae nane,
I'll gie cuckold to nae-body.

I hae a penny to spend,
There—thanks to nae-body;
I hae naething to lend,
I'll borrow frae nae-body.

I am nae-body's lord,
I'll be slave to nae-body;
I hae a guid braid sword,
I'll tak dunts frae nae-body.

I'll be merry and free,
I'll be sad for nae-body;
If nae-body care for me,
I'll care for nae-body.

NANCY.

THINE am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy;
Ev'ry pulse along my veins,
Ev'ry roving fancy.

To thy bosom lay my heart,
There to throb and languish;
Tho' despair had wrung its core,
That would heal its anguish.

Take away these rosy lips,
Rich with balmy treasure:
Turn away thine eyes of love,
Lest I die with pleasure.

What is life when wanting love?
Night without a morning:
Love's the cloudless summer sun,
Nature gay adorning.

NOW SPRING HAS CLAD THE GROVE IN GREEN.

Now spring has clad the grove in green,
And strew'd the lea wi' flowers;
The furrow'd waving corn is seen
Rejoice in fostering showers;

While ilka thing in nature join
Their sorrows to forego,
O why thus all alone are mine
The weary steps of woe!

The trout within yon wimpling burn
Glides swift, a silver dart,
And safe beneath the shady thorn
Defies the angler's art;
My life was ance that careless stream,
That wanton trout was I;
But love, wi' unrelenting beam,
Has scorch'd my fountains dry.

The little flow'ret's peaceful lot,
In yonder cliff that grows,
Which save the linnet's flight, I wot,
Nae ruder visit knows,
Was mine; till love has o'er me past,
And blighted a' my bloom,
And now beneath the withering blast,
My youth and joy consume.

The waken'd lav'rock warbling springs,
And climbs the early sky,
Winnowing blythe her dewy wings
In morning's rosy eye;
As little reckt I sorrow's power,
Until the flowery snare
O' witching love, in luckless hour,
Made me the thrall o' care.

O had my fate been Greenland's snows,
Or Afric's burning zone,
Wi' man and nature leagued my foes,
So Peggy ne'er I'd known!
The wretch whase doom is, "hope nae mair,"
That tongue his woes can tell!
Within whase bosom, save despair,
Nae kinder spirits dwell.

NOW BANK AND BRAE ARE CLAD IN GREEN.

Now bank and brae are clad in green
An' scatter'd cowslips sweetly spring,
By Girvan's fairy haunted stream
The birdies flit on wanton wing.
To Cassillis' banks when e'ening fa's,
There wi' my Mary let me flee,
There catch her ilka glance of love
The bonnie blink o' Mary's ee!

The child wha boasts o' warld's walth,
Is aften laird o' meikle care;
But Mary she is a' my ain,
Ah, fortune canna gie me mair!
Then let me range by Cassillis' banks,
Wi' her the lassie dear to me,
And catch her ilka glance o' love,
The bonnie blink o' Mary's ee!

NOW WESTLIN' WINDS.

Tune—"I had a horse, I had nae mair."

Now westlin' winds, and slaughtering guns,
Bring autumn's pleasant weather;
The muircock springs, on whirring wings,
Amang the blooming heather.
Now waving grain, wide o'er the plain,
Delights the weary farmer;
And the moon shine's bright, when I rove at night,
To muse upon my charmer.

The partridge loves the fruitful fells;
The plover loves the mountains;
The woodcock haunts the lonely dells;
The soaring hern the fountains.
Through lofty groves the cushat roves,
The path of man to shun it;
The hazel bush o'erhangs the thrush,
The spreading thorn the linnet.

Thus every kind their pleasure find,
The savage and the tender;
Some social join, and leagues combine;
Some solitary wander:
Avaunt, away! the cruel sway,
Tyrannic man's dominion;
The sportman's joy, the murdering cry,
The flutt'ring, gory pinion.

But, Peggy dear, the evening's clear,
Thick flies the skimming swallow;
The sky is blue, the fields in view,
All fading green and yellow:
Come let us stray our gladsome way,
And view the charms of nature;
The rustling corn, the fruited thorn,
And every happy creature.

We'll gently walk, and sweetly talk,
Till the silent moon shine clearly;
I'll grasp thy waist, and fondly press't,
And swear I love thee dearly.
Not vernal showers to budding flowers,
Not autumn to the farmer,
So dear can be as thou to me,
My fair, my lovely charmer!

OF A' THE AIRTS THE WIND CAN BLAW.

Tune—"Miss Admiral Gordon's Strathspey."

I COMPOSED this song out of compliment to Mrs. Burns. It was during the honey-moon.

Of a' the airts the wind can blaw,
I dearly like the west,
For there the bonnie lassie lives,
The lass that I loe best:
Tho' wild woods grow, and rivers row,
Wi' mony a hill between,

Baith day and night, my fancy's flight
Is ever wi' my Jean.

I see her in the dewy flow'r,
Sae lovely, sweet, and fair;
I hear her voice in ilka bird,
Wi' music charm the air:
There's not a bonnie flower that springs,
By fountain, shaw, or green,
Nor yet a bonnie bird that sings,
But minds me o' my Jean.

Upon the banks o' flowing Clyde
The lasses busk them braw;
But when their best they hae put on,
My Jeanie dings them a';
In hamely weeds she far exceeds
The fairest o' the town;
Baith sage and gay confess it sae,
Tho' drest in russet gown.

The gamesome lamb, that sucks its dam,
Mair harmless canna be;
She has nae faut, (if sic ye ca't),
Except her love for me:
The sparkling dew, o' clearest hue,
Is like her shining een;
In shape and air, nane can compare
Wi' my sweet lovely Jean.

O blaw, ye westlin winds, blaw saft
Amang the leafy trees;
Wi' gentle gale, frae muir and dale,
Bring hame the laden bees,
And bring the lassie back to me
That's aye sae neat and clean;
Ae blink o' her wad banish care,
Sae lovely is my Jean.

What sighs and vows amang the knowes,
Hae past atween us twa!
How fain to meet, how wae to part
That day she gaed awa!
The powers aboon can only ken,
To whom the heart is seen,
That nane can be sae dear to me
As my sweet lovely Jean.

O, AY MY WIFE SHE DANG ME.

Tune—"O, ay my Wife she dang me."

O, ay my wife she dang me,
And aft my wife she banged me!
If ye gie a woman a' her will,
Gude faith, she'll soon owergang ye.

On peace and rest my mind was bent,
And, fool I was, I married;
But never honest man's intent
As cursedly miscarried!
O, ay my wife, &c.

Some sair o' comfort still at last,
When a' thir days are dune, man—
My pains o' hell on earth is past,
I'm sure o' heaven aboon, man.
O, ay my wife, &c.

O BONNIE WAS YON ROSY BRIER.

O bonnie was yon rosy brier,
That blooms sae far frae haunt o' man;
And bonnie she, and ah! how dear!
It shaded frae the e'enin' sun.

Yon rosebuds in the morning dew
How pure, amang the leaves sae green;
But purer was the lover's vow
They witness'd in their shade yestreen.

All in its rude and prickly bower,
That crimson rose, how sweet and fair!
But love is far a sweeter flower
Amid life's thorny path o' care.

The pathless wild, and wimpling burn,
Wi' Chloris in my arms, be mine;
And I the world, nor wish, nor scorn,
Its joys and griefs alike resign.

O, FOR ANE AND TWENTY, TAM.

Tune—"The Moudiewort."

An' O, for ane and twenty, Tam!
An' hey, sweet ane and twenty, Tam!
I'll learn my kin a rattling sang,
An' I saw ane and twenty, Tam!

They snool me sair, and haud me down,
And gar me look like Bluntie, Tam!
But three short years will soon wheel roun',
And then comes ane and twenty, Tam!
An' O, for, &c.

A gleib o' lan', a claut o' gear,
Was left me by my auntie, Tam;
At kith or kin I need na' spier,
An' I saw ane and twenty, Tam.
An' O, for, &c.

They'll hae me wed a wealthy coof,
Tho' I mysel hae plenty, Tam;
But hears't thou, laddie, there's my loof,
I'm thine at ane and twenty, Tam!
An' O, for, &c.

OH, GIN MY LOVE WERE YON RED ROSE.

Tune—"Hughie Graham."

Oh, gin my love were yon red rose
That grows upon the castle wa',
And I mysell a drap o' dew,
Into her bonnie breast to fa'!
Oh, there, beyond expression blest,
I'd feast on beauty a' the nicht;
Seated on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
Till fleyed awa by Phœbus' licht.

ADDITIONAL STANZA BY BURNS.

O, were my love yon lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing;
How I wad mourn when it was torn
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
How I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renewed.

OH, WERT THOU IN THE CAULD BLAST.

Oh, wert thou in the cauld blast,
On yonder lea, on yonder lea;
My plaidie to the angry airt,
I'd shelter thee, I'd shelter thee:
Or did misfortune's bitter storms
Around thee blaw, around thee blaw,
Thy bield should be my bosom,
To share it a', to share it a'.

Or were I in the wildest waste,
Sae black and bare, sae black and bare,
The desert were a paradise,
If thou wert there, if thou wert there.
Or were I monarch of the globe,
With thee to reign, with thee to reign;
The brightest jewel in my crown
Wad be my queen, wad be my queen.

O LEAVE NOVELLES, YE MAUCHLINE BELLES.

A FRAGMENT.

Tune—"Donald Blue."

O leave novelles, ye Mauchline belles,
Ye're safer at your spinning wheel;
Such witching books are baited hooks,
For rakish rooks like Rob Mossgiel.
Sing tal, lal, lay.

Your fine Tom Jones and Grandisons,
They make your youthful fancies reel,
They heat your brains, and fire your veins,
And then you're prey for Rob Mossgiel.
Sing tal, lal, lay.

Beware a tongue that's smoothly hung;
A heart that warmly seeks to feel;
That feeling heart but acts a part,
'Tis rakish art in Rob Mossgiel.
Sing tal, lal, lay.

The frank address, the soft caress,
Are worse than poison'd darts of steel,
The frank address, and politesse,
Are all finesse in Rob Mossgiel.
Sing tal, lal, lay.

O LET ME IN THIS AE NIGHT

Tune—"Let me in this ae night."

O lassie, art thou sleeping yet,
Or art thou wakin, I would wit,
For love has bound me hand and foot,
And I would fain be in, jo.
O let me in this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night,
For pity's sake this ae night,
O rise and let me in, jo.

Thou hear'st the winter wind and weet,
Nae star blinks thro' the driving sleet,
Tak pity on my weary feet,
And shield me frae the rain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

The bitter blast that round me blaws
Unheeded howls, unheeded fa's;
The cauldness o' thy heart's the cause
Of a' my grief and pain, jo.
O let me in, &c.

HER ANSWER.

O tell nae me o' wind and rain,
Upbraid nae me wi' cauld disdain,
Gae back the road ye cam again,
I winna let you in, jo.
I tell you now this ae night,
This ae, ae, ae night;
And ance for a', this ae night;
I winna let you in, jo.

The snellest blast at mirkest hours,
That round the pathless wand'rer pours,
Is nought to what poor she endures
That's trusted faithless man, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The sweetest flower that deck'd the mead,
Now trodden like the vilest weed:
Let simple maid the lesson read,
The weird may be her ain, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

The bird that charm'd his summer-day,
Is now the cruel fowler's prey;
Let witless, trusting woman say
How aft her fate's the same, jo.
I tell you now, &c.

O LUVE WILL VENTURE IN.

O LUVE will venture in, where it daur na weel be seen,
O luve will venture in, where wisdom ance has been,
But I will down yon river rove, amang the wood sae green,
And a' to pu' a posie to my ain dear May.

The primrose I will pu', the firstling o' the year,
And I will pu' the pink, the emblem o' my dear,
For she's the pink o' womankind, and blooms without a peer;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

I'll pu' the budding rose, when Phœbus peeps in view,
For it's like a baumy kiss o' her sweet bonie mou;
The hyacinth's for constancy wi' its unchanging blue,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The lily it is pure, and the lily it is fair,
And in her lovely bosom I'll place the lily there;
The daisy's for simplicity and unaffected air,
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The hawthorn I will pu', wi' its locks o' siller grey,
Where, like an aged man, it stands at break o' day,
But the songster's nest within the bush I winna tak away;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

The woodbine I will pu', when the e'ening star is near,
And the diamond draps o' dew shall be her een sae clear;
The violet's for modesty which weel she fa's to wear;
And a' to be a posie to my ain dear May.

I'll tie the posie round wi' the silken band o' luve,
And I'll place it in her breast, and I'll swear by a' above,
That to my latest draught o' life the band shall ne'er remuve,
And this will be a posie to my ain dear May.

O MAY, THY MORN.

O MAY, thy morn was ne'er sae sweet,
As the mirk night o' December;
For sparkling was the rosy wine,
And private was the chamber:
And dear was she I darna name,
But I will aye remember.
And dear, &c.

And here's to them, that like oursel,
Can push about the jorum;
And here's to them that wish us weel,
May a' that's gude watch o'er them;
And here's to them we darna tell,
The dearest o' the quorum,
And here's to, &c.

ON CESSNOCK BANKS THERE LIVES A LASS.*

Tune—"If he be a butcher neat and trim."

ON Cessnock banks there lives a lass,
Could I describe her shape and mien;
The graces of her weelfar'd face,
And the glancin' of her sparklin' e'en.

She's fresher than the morning dawn
When rising Phoebus first is seen,
When dewdrops twinkle o'er the lawn;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

She's stately like yon youthful ash,
That grows the cowslip braes between,
And shoots its head above each bush;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

She's spotless as the flow'ring thorn
With flow'rs so white and leaves so green,
When purest in the dewy morn;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her looks are like the sportive lamb,
When flow'ry May adorns the scene,
That wantons round its bleating dam;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her hair is like the curling mist
That shades the mountain side at e'en,
When flow'r-reviving rains are past;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her forehead's like the show'ry bow,
When shining sunbeams intervene
And gild the distant mountain's brow;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

* This song was an early production. It was recovered from the oral communication of a lady residing at Glasgow whom the Bard in early life affectionately admired.

Her voice is like the ev'ning thrush
That sings in Cessnock banks unseen,
While his mate sits nestling in the bush;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her lips are like the cherries ripe,
That sunny walls from boreas screen,
They tempt the taste and charm the sight;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her teeth are like a flock of sheep,
With fleeces newly washen clean,
That slowly mount the rising step;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

Her breath is like the fragrant breeze
That gently stirs the blossom'd bean,
When Phœbus sinks behind the seas;
An' she's twa glancin' sparklin' e'en.

But it's not her air, her form, her face,
Tho' matching beauty's fabled queen,
But the mind that shines in ev'ry grace
An' chiefly in her sparklin' e'en.

ON THE SEAS AND FAR AWAY

Tune—"O'er the hills and far away."

How can my poor heart be glad,
When absent from my sailor lad?
How can I the thought forego,
He's on the seas to meet his foe!
Let me wander, let me rove,
Still my heart is with my love;
Nightly dreams and thoughts by day
Are with him that's far away.
On the seas and far away,
On stormy seas and far away;
Nightly dreams and thoughts by day,
Are aye with him that's far away.

When in summer's noon I faint,
As weary flocks around me pant,
Haply in this scorching sun
My sailor's thund'ring at his gun:
Bullets, spare my only joy!
Bullets, spare my darling boy!
Fate, do with me what you may,
Spare but him that's far away!
On the seas and far away, &c.

At the starless midnight hour,
When winter rules with boundless power,
As the storms the forests tear,
And thunders rend the howling air,
Listening to the doubling roar,
Surging on the rocky shore,
All I can—I weep and pray
For his weal that's far away.
On the seas and far away, &c.

Peace, thy olive wand extend,
And bid wild war his ravage end,
Man with brother man to meet,
And as a brother kindly greet.
Then may heaven with prosperous gales
Fill my sailor's welcome sails,
To my arms their charge convey,
My dear lad that's far away.
On the seas and far away, &c.

ON A BANK OF FLOWERS.

Tune—"On a bank of flowers."

On a bank of flowers, on a summer day,
For summer lightly drest,
The youthful, blooming Nelly lay,
With love and sleep opprest;
When Willie, wandering through the wood,
Who for her favour oft had sued;
He gazed, he wished, he feared, he blushed,
And trembled where he stood.

Her closed eyes, like weapons sheathed,
Were sealed in soft repose;
Her lips, still as she fragrant breathed,
It richer dyed the rose.
The springing lilie, sweetly prest,
Wild wanton kissed her rival breast.
He gazed, he wished, he feared, he blushed,
His bosom ill at rest.

Her robes, light waving in the breeze,
Her tender limbs embrace;
Her lovely form, her native ease,
All harmony and grace:
Tumultuous tides his pulses roll,
A faltering ardent kiss he stole;
He gazed, he wished, he feared, he blushed,
And sighed his very soul.

As flies the partridge from the brake,
On fear-inspired wings;
So Nelly, starting, half awake,
Away affrighted springs;
But Willie followed—as he should;
He overtook her in the wood;
He vowed, he prayed, he found the maid
Forgiving all and good!

OPEN THE DOOR TO ME, OH!

Oh, open the door, some pity show,
Oh, open the door to me, oh!
Though thou hast been false, I'll ever prove true,
Oh, open the door to me, oh!

Cauld is the blast upon my pale cheek,
But caulder thy love for me, oh!

The frost that freezes the life at my heart,
Is nought to my pains frae thee, oh!

The wan moon is setting behind the white wave,
And time is setting with me, oh!
False friends, false love, farewell! for mair
I'll ne'er trouble them nor thee, oh!

She has open'd the door, she has opened it wide,
She sees his pale corse on the plain, oh!
My true love, she cried, and sunk down by his side,
Never to rise again, oh!

O PHILLY, HAPPY BE THAT DAY.

Tune—"The sow's tail."

HE.

O PHILLY, happy be that day
When roving through the gather'd hay,
My youthfu' heart was stown away,
And by thy charms, my Philly.

SHE.

O Willie, aye I bless the grove
Where first I own'd my maiden love,
Whilst thou didst pledge the powers above,
To be my ain dear Willie.

HE.

As songsters of the early year
Are ilka day mair sweet to hear,
So ilka day to me mair dear
And charming is my Philly.

SHE.

As on the brier the budding rose
Still richer breathes and fairer blows,
So in my tender bosom grows
The love I bear my Willie.

HE.

The milder sun and bluer sky,
That crown my harvest cares wi' joy,
Were ne'er sae welcome to my eye
As is a sight of Philly.

SHE.

The little swallow's wanton wing,
Tho' wafting o'er the flowery spring,
Did ne'er to me sic tidings bring,
As meeting o' my Willie.

HE.

The bee, that thro' the sunny hour
Sips nectar in the opening flower,
Compar'd wi' my delight is poor,
Upon the lips o' Philly.

SHE.

The woodbine in the dewy weet
When evening shades in silence meet,
Is nocht sae fragrant or sae sweet
As is a kiss o' Willie.

HE.

Let fortune's wheel at random rin,
And fools may tyne, and knaves may win;
My thoughts are a' bound upon ane,
And that's my ain dear Philly.

SHE.

What's a' the joys that gowd can gie?
I care nae wealth a single flie;
The lad I love's the lad for me,
And that's my ain dear Willie.

O STAY, SWEET WARBLING WOOD-LARK.

Tune—"Loch-Erroch side."

O STAY, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray!
A hapless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.
Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
Sic notes of woe could wauken.
Thou tells o' never-ending care,
O' speechless grief and dark despair;
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair!
Or my poor heart is broken!

O WAT YE WHA'S IN YON TOUN.

Tune—"I'll gang nae mair to yon toun."

O WAT ye wha's in yon toun
Ye see the e'ening sun upon?
The fairest maid's in yon toun,
That e'ening sun is shining on.
Now haply down yon gay green shaw,
She wanders by yon spreading tree;
How blest, ye flow'rs, that round her blaw!
Ye catch the glances o' her ee.
How blest, ye birds, that round her sing,
And welcome in the blooming year!
And doubly welcome be the spring,
The season to my Jeanie dear!

The sun blinks blythe on yon toun,
Amang yon broomy braes sae green;
But my delight, in yon toun,
And dearest pleasure, is my Jean.
Without my love, not a' the charms
Of Paradise could yield me joy;

But gie me Jeanie in my arms,
And welcome Lapland's drearie sky.
My cave wad be a lover's bower,
Though raging winter rent the air;
And she a lovely little flower,
That I wad tent and shelter there.

O sweet is she in yon toun,
The sinking sun's gane down upon;
Ths dearest maid's in yon toun,
His setting beam e'er shone upon.
If angry fate be sworn my foe,
And suffering I am doom'd to bear,
I'll careless quit aught else below;
But spare, oh! spare me Jeanie dear.
For, while life's dearest blood runs warm,
My thoughts frae her shall ne'er depart:
For, as most lovely is her form,
She has the truest, kindest heart.

O WERE I ON PARNASSUS' HILL.

This air is Oswald's: the song I made out of compliment to Mrs. Burns.

O were I on Parnassus' hill,
Or had o' Helicon my fill;
That I might catch poetic skill,
To sing how dear I love thee.
But Nith maun be my Muse's well,
My Muse maun be thy bonnie sell;
On Corsincon I'll glow'r and spell,
And write how dear I love thee.

Then come, sweet Muse, inspire my lay!
For a' the lee-lang simmer's day,
I coudna sing, I coudna say,
How much, how dear, I love thee.
I see thee dancing o'er the green,
Thy waist sae jimp, thy limbs sae clean,
Thy tempting lips, thy roguish een—
By heaven and earth I love thee!

By night, by day, a-field, at hame,
The thoughts o' thee my breast inflame;
And ay I muse and sing thy name,
I only live to love thee!
Tho' I were doom'd to wander on,
Beyond the sea, beyond the sun,
'Till my last weary sand was run;
'Till then, and then I love thee!

O WHA IS SHE THAT LOES ME.

Tune—"Morag."

O wha is she that loes me,
And has my heart a-keeping?
O sweet is she that loes me,
As dews o' simmer weeping,
In tears the rose-bud steeping:
O that's the lassie o' my heart,
My lassie ever dearer;
O that's the queen o' womankind,
And ne'er a ane to peer her.

If thou shalt meet a lassie
In grace and beauty charming,
That e'en thy chosen lassie,
Erewhile thy breast sae warming,
Had ne'er sic powers alarming;
O that's, &c.

If thou hadst heard her talking,
And thy attentions plighted,
That ilka body talking,
But her by thee is slighted;
And if thou art delighted;
O that's, &c.

If thou hast met this fair one,
When frae her thou hast parted;
If every other fair one
But her, thou hast deserted,
And thou art broken-hearted;
O that's, &c.

OUT OVER THE FORTH I LOOK TO THE NORTH.

Out over the Forth I look to the north,
But what is the north and its Highlands to me?
The south nor the east gie ease to my breast,
The far foreign land, or the wild rolling sea.

But I look to the west, when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be;
For fär in the west lives he I lo'e best,
The lad that is dear to my babie and me.

PEGGY ALISON.

Ilk care and fear, when thou art near,
I ever mair defy them;
Young kings upon their hansel throne
Are no sae blest as I am!
I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
An' I'll kiss thee o'er again,
An' I'll kiss thee yet, yet,
My bonnie Peggy Alison.

When in my arms, wi' a' thy charms,
I clasp my countless treasure,
I seek nae mair o' Heaven to share,
Than sic a moment's pleasure!
I'll kiss, &c.

And by thy een, sae bonnie blue,
I swear I'm thine for ever;
And on thy lips I seal my vow,
And break it shall I never!
I'll kiss, &c.

POWERS CELESTIAL.

Powers celestial, whose protection
Ever guards the virtuous fair,
While in distant climes I wander,
Let my Mary be your care:
Let her form sae fair and faultless,
Fair and faultless as your own;
Let my Mary's kindred spirit,
Draw your choicest influence down.
Make the gales you waft around her,
Soft and peaceful as her breast;
Breathing in the breeze that fans her,
Sooth her bosom into rest:
Guardian angels, O protect her,
When in distant lands I roam;
To realms unknown while fate exiles me,
Make her bosom still my home.*

PHILLIS THE FAIR.

Tune—"Robin Adair."

While larks with little wing
Fanned the pure air,
Tasting the breathing spring,
Forth I did fare;
Gay the sun's golden eye
Peeped o'er the mountains high;
Such thy morn! did I cry,
Phillis the fair.

In each bird's careless song
Glad I did share,
While yon wild flowers among,
Chance led me there:
Sweet to the opening day,
Rosebuds bent the dewy spray;
Such thy bloom! did I say,
Phillis the fair.

Down in a shady walk,
Doves cooing were;
I marked the cruel hawk
Caught in a snare;
So kind may fortune be!
Such make his destiny,
He who would injure thee,
Phillis the fair!

* Probably written on Highland Mary, on the eve of the Poet's departure for the West Indies.

PUIRTITH CAULD.

Tune—"I had a horse."

O, puirtith cauld, and restless love,
Ye wreck my peace between ye;
Yet puirtith a' I could forgie,
An 'twere na for my Jeanie.
O, why should fate sic pleasure have,
Life's dearest bands untwining?
Or why sae sweet a flower as love
Depend on Fortune's shining?

This world's wealth when I think on,
Its pride, and a' the lave o't;
Fie, fie on silly coward man,
That he should be the slave o't.
O, why should fate, &c.

Her een, sae bonnie blue, betray
How she repays my passion;
But prudence is her owerword aye,
She talks of rank and fashion.
O, why should fate, &c.

O, wha can prudence think upon
And sic a lassie by him?
O, wha can prudence think upon,
And sae in love as I am?
O, why should fate, &c.

How blest the humble cottar's lot!
He woos his simple dearie;
The sillie bogles, wealth and state,
Can never make them eerie.
O, why should fate, &c.

RATTLIN, ROARIN WILLIE.

The last stanza of this song is mine; it was composed out of compliment to one of the worthiest fellows in the world, William Dunbar, Esq. Writer to the signet, Edinburgh, and Colonel of the Crochallan corps, a club of wits who took that title at the time of raising the fencible regiments.

O rattlin, roarin Willie,
O he held to the fair,
An' for to sell his fiddle,
And buy some ither ware;
But parting wi' his fiddle,
The saut tear blint his ee;
And rattlin roarin Willie,
Ye're welcome hame to me.

O Willie, come sell your fiddle,
O sell your fiddle sae fine;
O willie come sell your fiddle,
And buy a pint o' wine.
If I should sell my fiddle,
The warl' wou'd think I was mad,
For many a rantin day
My fiddle and I hae had!

RAVING WINDS AROUND HER BLOWING.

I composed these verses on Miss Isabella M'Leod of Raza, alluding to her feelings on the death of her sister, and the still more melancholy death of her sister's husband, the late Earl of Loudon.

Tune—"M'Grigor of Roro's Lament."

Raving winds around her blowing,
Yellow leaves the woodlands strewing,
By a river hoarsely roaring,
Isabella stray'd deploring.
Farewell hours, that late did measure
Sunshine days of joy and pleasure;
Hail! thou gloomy night of sorrow,
Cheerless night that knows no morrow!

O'er the Past too fondly pondering,
On the hopeless Future wandering;
Chilly grief my life-blood freezes,
Fell despair my fancy seizes.
Life, thou soul of every blessing,
Load to misery most distressing;
Gladly how would I resign thee,
And to dark oblivion join thee!

SAW YE OUGHT O' CAPTAIN GROSE.

Tune—"Sir John Malcolm."

Ken ye ought o' Captain Grose?
Igo and ago,
If he's among his friends or foes?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he South, or is he North?
Igo, and ago,
Or drowned in the river Forth?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he slain by Highland bodies?
Igo, and ago,
And eaten like a wether-haggis?
Iram, coram, dago.

Is he to Abram's bosom gane?
Igo, and ago,
Or haudin' Sarah by the wame?
Iram, coram, dago.

Where'er he be, the Lord be near him;
Igo, and ago,
As for the deil he daur na steer him,
Iram, coram, dago.

But please transmit th' inclosed letter,
Igo, and ago,
Which will oblige your humble debtor,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may you have auld stanes in store,
Igo, and ago,
The very stanes that Adam bore,
Iram, coram, dago.

So may ye get in glad possession,
Igo, and ago,
The coins o' Satan's coronation!
Iram, coram, dago.

SCROGGAM.

There was a wife wonned in Cockpen,
Scroggam;
She brewed gude ale for gentlemen:
Sing, auld Cowl, lay ye down by me;
Scroggam, my dearie, Ruffum.

The gudewife's dochter fell in a fever,
Scroggam;
The priest o' the parish fell in another:
Sing, auld Cowl, lay ye down by me;
Scroggam, my dearie, Ruffum.

They laid the twa in the bed thegither,
Scroggam,
That the heat o' the tane might cool the tother;
Sing, auld Cowl, lay ye down by me;
Scroggam, my dearie, Ruffum.

SHE'S FAIR AND FAUSE.

Tune—"She's fair and fause."

She's fair and fause that causes my smart,
I loo'd her mickle and lang;
She's broken her vow, she's broken my heart,
And I may e'en gae hang.
A cuif cam in wi' rowth o' gear,
And I hae tint my dearest dear;
But woman is but warld's gear,
Sae let the bonnie lass gang.

Whae'er ye be that woman love,
To this be never blind,
Nae ferlie 'tis though fickle she prove;
A woman has't by kind:
O woman, lovely woman fair!
An angel's form's faun to thy share,
'Twad been ower mickle to hae gi'en thee mair
I mean an angel mind.

SHE SAYS SHE LO'ES ME BEST OF A'.

Tune—"Onagh's Water-fall."

Sae flaxen were her ringlets,
Her eyebrows of a darker hue,

Bewitchingly o'er-arching
Twa laughing een o' bonnie blue.
Her smiling sae wyling,
Wad make a wretch forget his woe;
What pleasure, what treasure,
Unto these rosy lips to grow;
Such was my Chloris' bonnie face,
When first her bonnie face I saw,
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Like harmony her motion:
Her pretty ancle is a spy
Betraying fair proportion,
Wad make a saint forget the sky.
Sae warming, sae charming,
Her faultless form and graceful air;
Ilk feature—auld Nature
Declar'd that she could do nae mair:
Hers are the willing chains o' love,
By conquering beauty's sovereign law;
And aye my Chloris' dearest charm,
She says she lo'es me best of a'.

Let others love the city,
And gaudy show at sunny noon;
Gie me the lonely valley,
The dewy eve, and rising moon.
Fair beaming and streaming,
Her silver light the boughs amang;
While falling, recalling,
The amorous thrush concludes his sang:
There, dearest Chloris, wilt thou rove
By wimpling burn and leafy shaw,
And hear my vows o' truth and love,
And say thou lo'es me best of a'.

SIC A WIFE AS WILLIE HAD.

Tune—"Tibby Fowler."

Willie Wastle dwalt on Tweed,
The place they ca'd it Linkumdoddie.
Willie was a wabster gude,
Could stown a clew wi' onie bodie.
He had a wife was dour and din,
O, Tinkler Madgie was her mother:
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her!

She has an ee, she has but ane,
The cat has twa the very colour;
Twa rustie teeth, forbye a stump,
A clapper tongue wad deave a miller;
A whiskin' beard about her mou';
Her nose and chin they threaten ither:
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her!

She's bow-hough'd, she's hein-shinn'd,
Ae limpin' leg a hand-bread shorter;
She's twisted richt, she's twisted left,
To balance fair in ilka quarter:
She has a hump upon her breast,
The twin o' that upon her shouther:
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her!

Auld baudrons* by the ingle sits,
And wi' her loof her face a-washin';
But Willie's wife is nae sae trig,
She dichts her grunyie† wi' a hushion.‡
Her walie neeves,‖ like midden creels;
Her face wad fyle the Logan Water:
Sic a wife as Willie had,
I wadna gie a button for her!

STEER HER UP AND HAUD HER GAUN.

Tune—"Steer her up."

O steer her up and haud her gaun;
Her mother's at the mill, jo;
And gin she winna tak a man,
E'en let her tak her will, jo.

First shore her wi' a kindly kiss,
And ca' another gill, jo;
And gin she tak the thing amiss,
E'en let her flyte her fill, jo.

O steer her up, and be na blate;
And gin she tak it ill, jo,
Then lea' the lassie to her fate,
And time nae langer spill, jo.

Ne'er break your heart for ae rebut,
But think upon it still, jo,
That gin the lassie winna do't,
Ye'll find another will, jo.

SWEET FA'S THE EVE ON CRAIGIE-BURN.

Sweet fa's the eve on Craigie-burn,
And blythe awakes the morrow,
But a' the pride o' spring's return
Can yield me nocht but sorrow.

I see the flowers and spreading trees,
I hear the wild birds singing;
But what a weary wight can please,
And care his bosom wringing?

Fain, fain would I my griefs impart,
Yet dare na for your anger;
But secret love will break my heart,
If I conceal it langer.

If thou refuse to pity me,
If thou shalt love anither,

---

* The cat. † Mouth. ‡ Cushion. ‖ Fists.

When yon green leaves fade frae the tree,
Around my grave they'll wither.*

TAM GLEN.

My heart is a-breaking, dear tittie,
Some counsel unto me come len',
To anger them a' is a pity,
But what will I do wi' Tam Glen?

I'm thinking, wi' sic a braw fellow,
In poortith I might mak a fen:
What care I in riches to wallow,
If I maunna marry Tam Glen.

There's Lowrie the laird o' Dumeller,
"Gude day to you, brute," he comes ben:
He brags and he blaws o' his siller,
But when will he dance like Tam Glen?

My minnie does constantly deave me,
And bids me beware o' young men;
They flatter, she says, to deceive me,
But wha can think sae o' Tam Glen?

My daddie says, gin I'll forsake him,
He'll gie me gude hunder marks ten:
But, if it's ordain'd I maun tak him,
O wha will I get like Tam Glen?

Yestreen at the Valentine's dealing,
My heart to my mou gied a sten;
For thrice I drew ane without failing,
And thrice it was written Tam Glen.

The last Hallowe'en I was waukin
My droukit sark-sleeve, as ye ken;
His likeness cam up the house staukin,
And the very grey breeks o' Tam Glen!

Come counsel, dear tittie, don't tarry;
I'll gie you my bonnie black hen,
Gin ye will advise me to marry
The lad I lo'e dearly, Tam Glen.

THE AULD MAN.

But lately seen in gladsome green
The woods rejoiced the day,
Thro' gentle showers the laughing flowers
In double pride were gay:
But now our joys are fled,
On winter blasts awa!
Yet maiden May, in rich array,
Again shall bring them a'.

But my white pow, nae kindly thowe
Shall melt the snaws of age;
My trunk of eild, but buss or beild,
Sinks in time's wintry rage.
Oh, age has weary days,
And nights o' sleepless pain!
Thou golden time o' youthfu' prime,
Why comest thou not again!

THE BANKS O' DOON.

Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon,
How can ye bloom sae fresh and fair;
How can ye chant ye little birds,
And I sae weary fu' o' care!
Thou'll break my heart thou warbling bird,
That wantons thro' the flowering thorn:
Thou minds me o' departed joys,
Departed never to return.

Oft hae I rov'd by bonnie Doon,
To see the rose and woodbine twine;
And ilka bird sang o' its luve,
And, fondly, sae did I o' mine.
Wi' lightsome heart I pu'd a rose,
Fu' sweet upon its thorny tree;
And my fause lover stole my rose,
But ah! he left the thorn wi' me.

THE BANKS BY CASTLE-GORDON.

Tune—"Morag."

Streams that glide in orient plains
Never bound by winter's chains;
Glowing here on golden sands,
There commix'd with foulest stains
From tyranny's empurpled bands:
These, their richly gleaming waves,
I leave to tyrants and their slaves;
Give me the stream that sweetly laves
The banks by Castle-Gordon.

Spicy forests ever gay,
Shading from the burning ray
Hapless wretches sold to toil,
Or the ruthless native's way.
Bent on slaughter, blood, and spoil
Woods that ever verdant wave,
I leave the tyrant and the slave,
Give me the groves that lofty brave
The storms, by Castle-Gordon.

Wildly here, without control,
Nature reigns and rules the whole;
In that sober pensive mood,
Dearest to the feeling soul,
She plants the forest, pours the flood,
Life's poor day I'll musing rave,

* Cragie-burn wood is situated on the banks of the river Moffat, and about three miles distant from the village of that name, celebrated for its medicinal waters. The woods of Cragie-burn, and of Dumcrief, were at one time favourite haunts of our poet. It was there he met the "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks," and that he conceived several of his beautiful lyrics.

And find at night a sheltering cave,
Where waters flow and wild woods wave,
By bonnie Castle-Gordon.

THE BANKS OF THE DEVON.

Tune—" Rhannerach dhon na chri."

THESE verses were composed on a charming girl, a Miss Charlotte Hamilton, who is now married to James M'Kitrick Adair, Esq. physician. She is sister to my worthy friend, Gavin Hamilton, of Mauchline; and was born on the banks of Ayr, but was, at the time I wrote these lines, residing at Herveyston, in Clackmannanshire, on the romantic banks of the little river Devon.—I first heard the air from a lady in Inverness, and got the notes taken down for this work.

How pleasant the banks of the clear winding Devon,
With green spreading bushes and flow'rs blooming fair!
But the bonniest flow'r on the banks of the Devon,
Was once a sweet bud on the braes of the Ayr:
Mild be the sun on this sweet-blushing flow'r,
In the gay rosy morn as it bathes in the dew;
And gentle the fall of the soft vernal show'r,
That steals on the evening each leaf to renew!

O spare the dear blossom, ye orient breezes,
With chill, hoary-wing as ye usher the dawn!
And far be thou distant, thou reptile that seizest,
The verdure and pride of the garden or lawn!
Let Bourbon exult in his gay gilded lilies,
And England triumphant display her proud rose;
A fairer than either adorns the green vallies,
Where Devon, sweet Devon, meandering flows.

THE BANKS OF CREE.

Tune—" The banks of Cree."

HERE is the glen, and here the bower,
All underneath the birchen shade;
The village bell has toll'd the hour,
O, what can stay my lovely maid?

'Tis not Maria's whispering call,
'Tis but the balmy breathing gale,
Mixt with some warbler's dying fall,
The dewy star of eve to hail.

It is Maria's voice I hear!
So calls the woodlark to the grove,
His little faithful mate to cheer,
At once 'tis music—and 'tis love.

And art thou come, and art thou true!
O welcome dear to love and me!
And let us all our vows renew,
Along the flowery banks of Cree.

THE BARD'S SONG.

THE BARD'S SONG IN "THE JOLLY BEGGARS."

Tune—" Jolly mortals, fill your glasses."

SEE the smoking bowl before us,
Mark our jovial ragged ring!
Round and round take up the chorus,
And in raptures let us sing—
A fig for those by law protected,
Liberty's a glorious feast!
Courts for cowards were erected,
Churches built to please the priest.

What is title what is treasure,
What is reputation's care?
If we lead a life of pleasure,
'Tis no matter how or where.
A fig for those, &c.

Life is all a variorum,
We regard not how it goes;
Let them cant about decorum,
Who have characters to lose.
A fig for those, &c.

Here's to budgets, bags, and wallets!
Here's to all our wandering train!
Here's our ragged brats and callets!
One and all cry out, Amen!
A fig for those, &c.

THE BATTLE OF SHERIFF-MUIR,

BETWEEN THE DUKE OF ARGYLE AND THE EARL OF MAR.

"O CAM ye here the fight to shun,
Or herd the sheep wi' me, man?
Or were ye at the Sherra-muir,
And did the battle see, man?"
I saw the battle sair and teugh,
And reekin-red ran monie a sheugh,
My heart for fear gae sough for sough,
To hear the thuds, and see the cluds
O' clans frae woods, in tartan duds,
Wha glaum'd at kingdoms three, man.

The red-coat lads wi' black cockades,
To meet them were na slaw, man;
They rush'd and push'd, and bluid outgush'd,
And mony a bouk did fa', man:
The great Argyle led on his files,
I wat they glanced twenty miles!

They hack'd and hash'd, while broadswords clash'd,
And thro' they dash'd, and hew'd and smash'd,
Till fey men died awa, man.

But had you seen the philibegs,
And skyrin tartan trews, man,
When in the teeth they dar'd our whigs,
And covenant true blues, man;
In lines extended lang and large,
When bayonets opposed the targe,
And thousands hastened to the charge,
Wi' highland wrath they frae the sheath,
Drew blades o' death, till out o' breath,
They fled like frighted doos, man.

"O how deil Tam can that be true?
The chase gaed frae the north, man;
I saw myself, they did pursue
The horsemen back to Forth, man;
And at Dumblane, in my ain sight,
They took the brig wi' a' their might,
And straught to Stirling winged their flight;
But, cursed lot! the gates were shut;
And mony a hunted poor red-coat
For fear amaist did swarf, man."

My sister Kate came up the gate
Wi' crowdie unto me, man:
She swoor she saw some rebels run,
Frae Perth unto Dundee, man;
Their left-hand general had nae skill,
The Angus lads had nae good will
That day their neebor's blood to spill;
For fear by foes, that they should lose
Their cogs o' brose; all crying woes,
And so it goes, you see, man.

They've lost some gallant gentlemen,
Amang the Highland clans, man;
I fear my Lord Panmure is slain,
Or fallen in whiggish hands, man.
Now wad ye sing this double fight,
Some fell for wrang, and some for right;
But mony bade the world gude-night;
Then ye may tell, how pell and mell,
By red claymores, and muskets, knell,
Wi' dying yell, the tories fell,
And whigs to hell did flee, man.*

THE BIRKS OF ABERFELDY.

I COMPOSED these stanzas standing under the Falls of Aberfeldy, at or near Moness.

Tune—"The Birks of Abergeldy."

Bonnie lassie, will ye go, will ye go, will ye go,
Bonnie lassie, will ye go, to the Birks of Aberfeldy?

Now simmer blinks on flowery braes,
And o'er the crystal streamlets plays;
Come, let us spend the lichtsome days
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

While o'er their head the hazels hing,
The little birdies blythely sing,
Or lichtly flit on wanton wing,
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

The braes ascend like lofty wa's,
The foamin' stream deep-roaring fa's,
O'erhung wi' fragrant spreadin' shaws,
The Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

The hoary cliffs are crown'd wi' flow'rs,
White ower the lin the burnie pours,
And, risin', weets wi' misty show'rs
The Birks of Aberfeldy.
Bonnie lassie, &c.

Let fortune's gifts at random flee,
They ne'er shall draw a wish frae me,
Supremely bless'd wi' love and thee,
In the Birks of Aberfeldy.*
Bonnie lassie, &c.

THE BIG-BELLIED BOTTLE.

Tune—"Prepare, my dear Brethren, to the Tavern let's fly."

No churchman am I, for to rail and to write;
No statesman or soldier, to plot or to fight;
No sly man of business, contriving a snare;
For a big-bellied bottle's the whole of my care.

The peer I don't envy—I give him his bow;
I scorn not the peasant, though ever so low;
But a club of good fellows, like those that are here,
And a bottle like this, are my glory and care.

Here passes the squire on his brother—his horse;
There centum-per-centum, the cit with his purse;
But see you 'the Crown,' how it waves in the air!
There a big-bellied bottle still eases my care.

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* This was written about the time our bard made his tour to the Highlands, 1787.

* The chorus is borrowed from an old simple ballad, called "The Birks of Abergeldy;" of which the following is a fragment.

Bonnie lassie, will ye go,
Will ye go, will ye go,
Bonnie lassie, will ye go
To the birks o' Abergeldie?
Ye shall get a gown o' silk,
A gown o' silk, a gown o' silk,
Ye shall get a gown o' silk,
And coat of callimankie.

The wife of my bosom, alas! she did die;
For sweet consolation to church I did fly;
I found that old Solomon proved it fair,
That a big-bellied bottle's a cure for all care.

I once was persuaded a venture to make;
A letter inform'd me that all was to wreck;
But the pursy old landlord just waddled up stairs,
With a glorious bottle, that ended my cares.

"Life's cares they are comforts," * a maxim laid down
By the bard, what d'ye call him, that wore the black gown;
And faith I agree with th' old prig to a hair,
For a big-bellied bottle's a heaven of care.

STANZA ADDED IN A MASON LODGE.

Then fill up a bumper, and make it o'erflow,
And honours masonic prepare for to throw;
May every true brother of the compass and square
Have a big-bellied bottle when harass'd with care.

THE BLUE-EYED LASSIE.

I GAED a waefu' gate yestreen,
A gate, I fear, I'll dearly rue;
I gat my death frae twa sweet een,
'Twa lovely een o' bonnie blue.
'Twas not her golden ringlets bright;
Her lips like roses, wat wi' dew,
Her heaving bosom, lily-white—
It was her e'en sae bonnie blue.

She talk'd, she smiled, my heart she wyl'd,
She charm'd my soul I wist na how;
And aye the stound, the deadly wound,
Cam frae her een sae bonnie blue.
But spare to speak, and spare to speed;
She'll aiblins listen to my vow:
Should she refuse, I'll lay my dead
To her twa een sae bonnie blue.†

THE BONNIE WEE THING.

COMPOSED on my little idol, "The charming, lovely Davies."

Bonnie wee thing, cannie wee thing,
Lovely wee thing was thou mine;
I wad wear thee in my bosom,
Lest my jewel I should tine.

Wishfully I look and languish,
In that bonnie face of thine;
And my heart it stounds wi' anguish,
Lest my wee thing be na mine.
Bonnie wee thing, &c.

Wit, and grace, and love, and beauty,
In ae constellation shine;
To adore thee is my duty,
Goddess o' this soul o' mine!
Bonnie wee thing, &c.

THE BRAES O' BALLOCHMYLE.

THE Catrine woods were yellow seen,
The flowers decayed on Catrine lee, *
Nae lav'rock sang on hillock green,
But nature sicken'd on the ee.
Thro' faded groves Maria sang,
Hersel' in beauty's bloom the while,
And aye the wild wood echoes rang,
Fareweel the braes o' Ballochmyle.

Low in your wintry beds, ye flowers,
Again ye'll flourish fresh and fair;
Ye birdies dumb, in withering bowers,
Again ye'll charm the vocal air.
But here, alas! for me nae mair,
Shall birdie charm, or floweret smile;
Fareweel the bonnie banks of Ayr,
Fareweel, fareweel! sweet Ballochmyle!

THE CARL OF KELLYBURN BRAES.

THESE words are mine; I composed them from the old traditionary verses.

THERE lived a carl on Kellyburn braes,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
And he had a wife was the plague o' his days;
And the thyme it is wither'd and the rue is in prime.

Ae day as the carl gaed up the lang glen,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
He met wi' the devil; says, "How do yow fen?"
And the thyme it is wither'd and the rue is in prime.

"I've got a bad wife, Sir; that's a' my complaint;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)

* Young's Night Thoughts.

† The heroine of this song was Miss J. of Lochmaben. This lady, now Mrs. R. after residing some time in Liverpool, is settled with her husband in New York, North America.

* Catrine, in Ayrshire, the seat of Dugald Stewart, Esq. Professor of Moral Philosophy in the University of Edinburgh. Ballochmyle, formerly the seat of Sir John Whitefoord, now of —— Alexander, Esq. (1800.

For, saving your presence, to her ye're a saint ;
And the thyme it is wither'd and the rue is in prime."

" It's neither your stot nor your staig I shall crave,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
But gie me your wife, man, for her I must have,
And the thyme it is wither'd and the rue is in prime."

" O welcome, most kindly," the blythe earl said,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
But if ye can match her, ye're war nor ye're ca'd,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime."

The devil has got the auld wife on his back ;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
And, like a poor pedlar, he's carried his pack ;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime.

He's carried her hame to his ain hallan-door ;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
Syne bade her gae in, for a bitch and a whore,
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime.

Then straight he makes fifty, the pick o' his band,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
Turn out on her gaurd in the clap of a hand ;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is prime.

The carlin gaed thro' them like ony wude bear,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
Whae'er she gat hands on came near her nae mair ;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime.

" A reekit wee devil looks over the wa' ;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
O, help, master, help, or she'll ruin us a',
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime."

The devil he swore by the edge o' his knife,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
He pitied the man that was tied to a wife ;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime.

The devil he swore by the kirk and the bell,
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
He was not in wedlock, thank heaven, but in hell ;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime.

Then Satan has travelled again wi' his pack ;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
And to her auld husband he's carried her back ;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime.

" I hae been a devil the feck o' my life ;
(Hey, and the rue grows bonnie wi' thyme)
But ne'er was in hell, till I met wi' a wife ;
And the thyme it is wither'd, and the rue is in prime.

THE CHEVALIER'S LAMENT.

Tune—" Captain O' Kaine."

The small birds rejoice in the green leaves returning ;
The murmuring streamlet runs clear through the vale ;
The hawthorn trees blow in the dews of the morning ;
And wild scattered cowslips bedeck the green dale.
But what can give pleasure, or what can seem fair,
When the lingerin' moments are numbered by care ?
No flowers gaily springing,
Or birds sweetly singing,
Can sooth the sad bosom of joyless despair.

The deed that I dared, could it merit their malice—
A king and a father to place on his throne !
His right are these hills, and his right are these valleys,
Where the wild beasts find shelter, but I can find none.
But 'tis not my sufferings, thus wretched, forlorn ;
My brave gallant friends, 'tis your ruin I mourn,
Your deeds proved so loyal
In hot bloody trial ;
Alas ! can I make it no better return !

THE DAY RETURNS, MY BOSOM BURNS.

Tune—" Seventh of November."

The day returns, my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet,
Tho' winter wild in tempest toil'd,
Ne'er summer sun was half sae sweet ;
Than a' the pride that loads the tide,
And crosses o'er the sultry line ;
Than kingly robes, than crowns and globes,
Heaven gave me more, it made thee mine.

While day and night can bring delight,
Or nature ought of pleasure give !

While joys above, my mind can move,
For thee, and thee alone, I live!
When that grim foe of life below,
Comes in between to make us part;
The iron hand that breaks our band,
It breaks my bliss—it breaks my heart.

THE DEATH SONG.

SCENE—A Field of Battle.—TIME OF THE DAY—Evening.—The Wounded and Dying of the Victorious Army are supposed to join in the following SONG:

FAREWELL, thou fair day, thou green earth, and ye skies,
Now gay with the bright setting sun;
Farewell, loves and friendships, ye dear tender ties,
Our race of existence is run!

Thou grim King of Terrors, thou life's gloomy foe,
Go, frighten the coward and slave;
Go teach them to tremble, fell tyrant! but know,
No terrors hast thou to the brave.

Thou strikest the dull peasant; he sinks in the dark,
Nor saves even the wreck of a name;
Thou strikest the young hero—a glorious mark!
He falls in the blaze of his fame!

In the proud field of honour—our swords in our hands,
Our king and our country to save—
While victory shines on life's last ebbing sands,
O! who would not die with the brave!

THE DEIL'S AWA WI' THE EXCISEMAN.

THE deil cam fiddling through the toun,
And danced awa wi' the exciseman;
And ilka auld wife cried, Auld Mahoun,
I wish you luck o' the prize, man.
The deil's awa, the deil's awa,
The deil's awa wi' the exciseman;
He's danced awa, he's danced awa,
He's danced awa wi' the exciseman!

We'll mak our maut, we'll brew our drink,
We'll laugh, sing, and rejoice, man;
And mony braw thanks to the meikle black deil,
That danced awa wi' the exciseman!
The deil's awa, &c.

There's threesome reels, there's foursome reels,
There's hornpipes and strathspeys, man;
But the ae best dance e'er cam to the heels,
Was, The deil's awa wi' the exciseman.
The deil's awa, &c.

THE ELECTION.

Tune—"Fy, let us a' to the bridal."

Fy, let us a' to Kirkcudbright,
For there will be bickering there,
For Murray's light horse are to muster;
And oh, how the heroes will swear!

AND there will be Murray commander,
And Gordon the batttle to win:
Like brithers they'll stand by each other,
Sae knit in alliance and sin.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be black-nebbed Johnnie,
The tongue of the trump to them a';
If he get na hell for his haddin',
The deil gets nae justice ava!
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be Templeton's birkie,
A boy no sae black at the bane;
But, as to his fine Nabob fortune,
We'll e'en let the subject alane.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be Wigton's new sheriff:
Dame Justice fu' brawly has sped;
She's gotten the heart of a B——by,
But what has become of the head?
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be Cardoness' squire,
So mighty in Cardoness' eyes;
A wight that will weather damnation,
For the devil the prey will despise.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be Douglasses doughty,
New christening towns far and near;
Abjuring their democrat doings,
By kissing the doup of a peer
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be Kenmure sae generous,
Whose honour is proof 'gainst the storm;
To save them frae stark reprobation,
He lent them his name to the firm.
Fy, let us a', &c.

But we winna mention Redcastle;
The body, e'en let him escape:
He'd venture the gallows for siller,
An 'twerena the cost o' the rape.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there is our King's Lord Lieutenant,
Sae famed for his grateful return?

The billie is getting his questions,
To say in St. Stephen's the morn.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be lads of the gospel,
Muirhead, wha's as gude as he's true;
And there will be Buittle's apostle,
Wha's mair o' the black than the blue.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be folk frae St. Mary's,*
A house o' great merit and note:
The deil ane but honours them highly—
The deil ane will gie them his vote.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be wealthy young Richard:
Dame Fortune should hing by the neck:
But for prodigal thriftless bestowing,
His merit had won him respect.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be rich brither Nabobs;
Though Nabobs, yet men o' the first:
And there will be Colliston's whiskers,
And Quintin, o' lads not the warst.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be Stamp-office Johnnie—
Tak tent how you purchase a dram;
And there will be gay Cassencarry;
And there will be gleg Colonel Tam.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be trusty Kirrochtrie,
Whase honour is ever his sa',
If the virtues were packed in a parcel,
His worth might be sample for a'.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And can we forget the auld Major,
Wha'll ne'er be forgot in the Greys?
Our flattery we'll keep for some other;
Him only it's justice to praise.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be maiden Kilkerran,
And also Barskimming's gude wight;
And there will be roaring Birtwhistle,
Wha luckily roars in the right.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there, frae the Niddisdale border,
We'll mingle the Maxwells in droves,
Teuch Jockie, stanch Geordie, and Willie,
That granes for tne fishes and loves.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And there will be Logan M'D——l;
Sculduddery and he will be there;
And also the Scott o' Galloway,
Sodgering, gunpowder Blair.
Fy, let us a', &c.

Then hey! the chaste interest o' Broughton,
And hey for the blessings 'twill bring!
It may send Balmaghie to the Commons;
In Sodom 'twould make him a king.
Fy, let us a', &c.

And hey! for the sanctified M—r—y,
Our land wha wi' chapels has stored;
He foundered his horse among harlots,
But gied the *auld mare* to the Lord.
Fy, let us a', &c.

* Meaning the family of the Earl of Selkirk, resident at St. Mary's Isle, near Kirkcudbright.

THE GALLANT WEAVER.

Where Cart rins rowin to the sea,
By mony a flow'r and spreading tree,
There lives a lad, the lad for me,
He is a gallant weaver.

Oh I had wooers aught or nine,
They gied me rings and ribbons fine;
And I was fear'd my heart would tine,
And I gied it to the weaver.

My daddie sign'd my tocher-band
To gie the lad that has the land,
But to my heart I'll add my hand,
And give it to the weaver.

While birds rejoice in leafy bowers;
While bees delight in opening flowers;
While corn grows green in simmer showers,
I'll love my gallant weaver.*

* In some editions *sailor* is substituted for *weaver*.

THE GARDENER WI' HIS PAIDLE.

This air is the *Gardeners' March.* The title of the song only is old; the rest is mine.

When rosy May comes in wi' flowers,
To deck her gay, green-spreading bowers;
Then busy, busy are his hours,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

The crystal waters gently fa';
The merry birds are lovers a';
The scented breezes round him blaw,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

When purple morning starts the hare
To steal upon her early fare;
Then thro' the dews he maun repair,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

When day expiring in the west,
The curtain draws of nature's rest;
He flies to her arms he lo'es best,
The gard'ner wi' his paidle.

THE GLOOMY NIGHT IS GATHERING FAST.

Tune—"Banks of Ayr."

The gloomy night is gath'ring fast,
Loud roars the wild inconstant blast,
Yon murky cloud is foul with rain,
I see it driving o'er the plain.
The hunter now has left the moor,
The scatter'd coveys meet secure,
While here I wander, prest with care,
Along the lonely banks of Ayr.

The autumn mourns her ripening corn,
By early winter's ravage torn;
Across her placid azure sky
She sees the scowling tempest fly:
Chill runs my blood to hear it rave,
I think upon the stormy wave,
Where many a danger I must dare,
Far from the bonnie banks of Ayr.

'Tis not the surging billows' roar,
'Tis not that fatal, deadly shore;
Though death in every shape appear,
The wretched have no more to fear:
But round my heart the ties are bound,
That heart transpierced with many a wound;
These bleed afresh, those ties I tear,
To leave the bonnie banks of Ayr.

Farewell old Coila's hills and dales,
Her heathy moors and winding vales;
The scene where wretched fancy roves,
Pursuing past, unhappy loves!
Farewell my friends, farewell my foes,
My peace with these, my love with those;
The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell the bonnie banks of Ayr.*

THE HEATHER WAS BLOOMING.

Tune—"I red you beware at the hunting."

The heather was blooming, the meadows were mawn,
Our lads gaed a hunting, ae day at the dawn,
O'er moors and o'er mosses and mony a glen,
At length they discovered a bonnie moor-hen.

I red you beware at the hunting, young men;
I red you beware at the hunting, young men;
Tak some on the wing, and some as they spring,
But cannily steal on a bonnie moor-hen.

Sweet brushing the dew from the brown heather bells,
Her colours betray'd her on yon mossy fells;
Her plumage outlustred the pride o' the spring,
And O! as she wantoned gay on the wing.
I red, &c.

Auld Phœbus himsel, as he peep'd o'er the hill;
In spite at her plumage he tryed his skill;
He levell'd his rays where she bask'd on the brae—
His rays were outshone, and but mark'd where she lay.
I red, &c.

They hunted the valley, they hunted the hill;
The best of our lads wi' the best o' their skill;
But still as the fairest she sat in their sight,
Then, whirr! she was over, a mile at a flight.—
I red, &c.

. . . . . .

THE HIGHLAND LASSIE, O.

This was a composition of mine in very early life, before I was known at all in the world.

Nae gentle dames, tho' ne'er sae fair,
Sall ever be my Muse's care;
Their titles a' are empty shew;
Gie me my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen sae bushy, O,
Aboon the plain sae rashy, O,
I set me down wi' right good will,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

O were yon hills and vallies mine,
Yon palace and yon gardens fine!
The world then the love should know
I bear my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

But fickle fortune frowns on me,
And I maun cross the raging sea;
But while my crimson currents flow,
I'll lo'e my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

Altho' thro' foreign climes I range,
I know her heart will never change,
For her bosom burns with honour's glow,
My faithful Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

For her I'll dare the billow's roar;
For her I'll trace a distant shore;

* Burns wrote this song, while convoying his chest so far on the road from Ayrshire to Greenock, where he intended to embark in a few days for Jamaica. He designed it, he says, as his farewell dirge to his native country.

That Indian wealth may lustre throw
Around my Highland lassie, O.
Within the glen, &c.

She has my heart, she has my hand,
By secret truth and honour's band!
'Till the mortal stroke shall lay me low,
I'm thine, my Highland lassie, O.
Farewell the glen, sae bushy, O,
Farewell the plain, sae rashy, O,
To other lands I now must go,
To sing my Highland lassie, O.

THE LAD THAT'S FAR AWA.

Tune—"O'er the hills and far awa."

O, how can I be blithe and glad,
Or how can I gang brisk and braw,
When the bonnie lad that I lo'e best
Is o'er the hills and far awa?

It's no the frosty winter wind,
It's no the driving drift and snaw;
But aye the tear comes in my ee
To think on him that's far awa.

My father pat me frae his door,
My friends they hae disown'd me a';
But I hae ane will take my part,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

A pair o' gloves he gae to me,
And silken snoods he gae me twa;
And I will wear them for his sake,
The bonnie lad that's far awa.

The weary winter soon will pass,
And spring will cleed the birken shaw;
And my sweet babie will be born,
And he'll come hame that's far awa.

THE LASS OF BALLOCHMYLE.

Tune—"The Lass of Ballochmyle."

'Twas even, the dewy fields were green,
On ilka blade the pearls hang;
The zephyr wanton'd round the bean,
And bore its fragrant sweets alang:
In ev'ry glen the mavis sang;
All nature list'ning seem'd the while,
Except where greenwood echoes rang,
Amang the braes o' Ballochmyle.

With careless step I onward stray'd,
My heart rejoiced in Nature's joy;
When, musing in a lonely glade,
A maiden fair I chanced to spy:
Her look was like the morning's eye,
Her air like Nature's vernal smile;
The lily's hue, and rose's dye,
Bespake the lass o' Ballochmyle.

Fair is the morn in flowery May,
And sweet is night in Autumn mild,
When roving through the garden gay,
Or wand'ring in the lonely wild;
But woman, Nature's darling child!
There all her charms she does compile;
Even there her other works are foil'd,
By the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

Oh, had she been a country maid,
And I the happy country swain,
Though shelter'd in the lowest shed
That ever rose on Scotland's plain!
Through weary winter's wind and rain,
With joy, with rapture, I would toil;
And nightly to my bosom strain
The bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.

Then pride might climb the slipp'ry steep,
Where fame and honours lofty shine;
And thirst of gold might tempt the deep,
Or downward dig the Indian mine.
Give me the cot below the pine,
To tend the flocks, or till the soil,
And ev'ry day have joys divine,
Wi' the bonnie lass o' Ballochmyle.*

THE LASS THAT MADE THE BED TO ME.†

When Januar winds were blawin' cauld,
Unto the north I bent my way,
The mirksome nicht did me enfauld,
I kend na where to lodge till day;
But by good luck a lass I met,
Just in the middle of my care,
And kindly she did me invite
To walk into a chamber fair.

I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And thank'd her for her courtesie;
I bow'd fu' low unto this maid,
And bade her make the bed to me.

---

* This song was written in praise of Miss Alexander of Ballochmyle. Burns happened one fine evening to meet this young lady, when walking through the beautiful woods of Ballochmyle, which lie at the distance of two miles from his farm of Mossgiel. Struck with a sense of her passing beauty, he wrote this noble lyric; which he soon after sent to her, enclosed in a letter, as full of delicate and romantic sentiment, and as poetical as itself. He was somewhat mortified to find, that either maidenly modest, or pride of superior station, prevented her from acknowledging the receipt of his compliment: Indeed it is no where recorded that she, at any stage of life, shewed the smallest sense of it; as to *her* the pearls seem to have been literally thrown away.

† There is an older and coarser song, containing the same incidents, and said to have been occasioned by an adventure of Charles II., when that monarch resided in Scotland with the Presbyterian army, 1650–51. The affair happened at the house of Port-Lethem, in Aberdeenshire, and it was a daughter of the laird that made the bed to the king.

She made the bed baith wide and braid,
Wi' twa white hands she spread it doun;
She put the cup to her rosy lips,
And drank, Young man, now sleep ye soun.

She snatch'd the candle in her hand,
And from the chamber went wi' speed:
But I ca'd her quickly back again,
To lay some mair beneath my heid.
A cod she laid beneath my heid,
And served me with a due respect;
And, to salute her wi' a kiss,
I put my arms about her neck.

Haud aff your hands, young man, she says,
And dinna sae uncivil be;
It will be time to speak the morn,
If ye hae ony love for me.
Her hair was like the links o' gowd,
Her teeth were like the ivorie,
Her cheeks like lilies dipt in wine,
The lass that made the bed to me.

Her bosom was the driven snaw,
Twa driftit heaps sae fair to see;
Her limbs the polish'd marble stane,
The lass that made the bed to me.
I kiss'd her ower and ower again,
And aye she wistna what to say;
I laid her 'tween me and the wa';
The lassie thocht na lang till day.

Upon the morrow, when we rase,
I thank'd her for her courtesie;
And aye she blush'd, and aye she sigh'd,
And said, Alas! ye've ruin'd me.
I clasp'd her waist, and kiss'd her syne,
While the tear stood twinklin' in her ee;
I said, My lassie, dinna cry,
For ye aye shall mak the bed to me.

She took her mother's Holland sheets,
And made them a' in sarks to me;
Blythe and merry may she be,
The lass that made the bed to me.
The bonnie lass that made the bed to me,
The braw lass that made the bed to me;
I'll ne'er forget, till the day I dee,
The lass that made the bed to me.

THE LAZY MIST.

The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,
Concealing the course of the dark winding rill;
How languid the scenes, late so sprightly, appear,
As autumn to winter resigns the pale year.
The forests are leafless, the meadows are brown,
And all the gay foppery of summer is flown:
Apart let me wander, apart let me muse,
How quick time is flying, how keen fate pursues;
How long I have liv'd—but how much liv'd in vain!
How little of life's scanty span may remain:
What aspects old Time, in his progress, has worn;
What ties cruel Fate in my bosom has torn.
How foolish, or worse, 'till our summit is gain'd!
And downward, how weaken'd, how darken'd, how pain'd!
This life's not worth having with all it can give,
For something beyond it poor man sure must live.

THE LEA-RIG.

Tune—"The Lea-Rig."

When o'er the hills the eastern star
Tells buchtin-time is near, my jo;
And owsen frae the furrowed field
Return sae douff and weary, O;
Down by the burn, where scented birks
Wi' dew are hanging clear, my jo,
I'll meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

In mirkest glen, at midnicht hour,
I'd rove and ne'er be eerie, O,
If through that glen I gaed to thee,
My ain kind dearie, O.
Although the night were ne'er sae wild,
And I were ne'er sae wearie, O,
I'd meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

THE LOVELY LASS OF INVERNESS.

The first half stanza of this ballad is old.

The lovely lass o' Inverness,
Nae joy nor pleasure can she see;
For e'en and morn, she cries, alas!
And aye the saut tear blins her ee.
Drumossie moor, Drumossie day,
A waefu' day it was to me;
For there I lost my father dear,
My father dear and brethren three:

Their winding sheet the bluidy clay,
Their graves are growing green to see:
And by them lies the dearest lad
That ever blest a woman's ee:
Now wae to thee thou cruel lord,
A bluidy man I trow thou be,
For mony a heart thou hast made sair,
That ne'er did wrang to thine or thee!

THE LOVER'S MORNING SALUTE TO HIS MISTRESS.

Tune—"Deil tak the wars."

Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature?
Rosy morn now lifts his eye,
Numbering ilka bud which nature
Waters wi' the tears o' joy:
Now through the leafy woods,
And by the reeking floods;
Wild Nature's tenants, freely, gladly stray;
The lintwhite in his bower
Chants o'er the breathing flower:
The lav'rock to the sky
Ascends wi' sangs o' joy,
While the sun and thou arise to bless the day.*
Phœbus gilding the brow o' morning
Banishes ilka darksome shade,
Nature gladdening and adorning;
Such to me my lovely maid.
When absent frae my fair,
The murky shades o' care
With starless gloom o'ercast my sullen sky;
But when in beauty's light,
She meets my ravish'd sight,
When through my very heart
Her beaming glories dart;
'Tis then I wake to life, to light and joy. †

THE RIGS O' BARLEY.

Tune—"Corn-Rigs are bonnie."

It was upon a Lammas night,
When corn-rigs are bonnie,
Beneath the moon's unclouded light,
I held awa to Annie.
The time flew by wi' tentless heed,
'Till, 'tween the late and early,
Wi' sma' persuasion shee agreed
To see me through the barley.

The sky was blue, the wind was still,
The moon was shining clearly;
I set her down, wi' right good-will,
Amang the rigs o' barley.
I ken't her heart was a' my ain;
I loved her most sincerely;
I kiss'd her ower and ower again,
Amang the rigs o' barley.
I lock'd her in my fond embrace!
Her heart was beating rarely—
My blessings on that happy place,
Amang the rigs o' barley!
But by the moon and stars so bright,
That shone that hour sae clearly!
She aye shall bless that happy night,
Amang the rigs o' barley.

I hae been blythe wi' comrades dear;
I hae been merry drinking;
I hae been joyfu' gathering gear;
I hae been happy thinking:
But a' the pleasures e'er I saw,
Though they were doubled fairly,
That happy night was worth them a',
Amang the rigs o' barley.

THE SOLDIER'S RETURN.

Tune—"The Mill, Mill, O."

When wild war's deadly blast was blawn,
And gentle peace returning,
And eyes again wi' pleasure beam'd,
That had been blear'd wi' mourning;
I left the lines and tented field,
Where lang I'd been a lodger;
My humble knapsack a' my wealth;
A poor but honest sodger.

A leal light heart beat in my breast,
My hands unstain'd wi' plunder;
And for fair Scotia hame again,
I cheery on did wander.
I thought upon the banks o' Coil,
I thought upon my Nancy;
I thought upon the witching smile,
That caught my youthful fancy.

At length I reach'd the bonnie glen,
Where early life I sported;
I pass'd the mill and trysting thorn,
Where Nancy oft I courted.
Wha spied I but my ain dear maid,
Down by her mother's dwelling?
And turn'd me round to hide the flood
That in my ee was swelling.

Wi' alter'd voice, quoth I, sweet lass,
Sweet as yon hawthorn's blossom,
O! happy, happy may he be,
That's dearest to thy bosom!
My purse is light, I've far to gang,
And fain wad be thy lodger;
I've serv'd my king and country lang.
Tak pity on a sodger.

Sae wistfully she gazed on me,
And lovelier grew than ever;
Quoth she, A sodger ance I loved,
Forget him will I never.

---

* *Variation.* Now to the streaming fount'ain,
Or up the heathy mountain
The hart, hind, and roe, freely, wildly-wanton stray;
In twining hazel bowers
His lay the linnet pours:
The lav'rock, &c.

† *Variation.* When frae my Chloris parted,
Sad, cheerless, broken-hearted,
Then night's gloomy shades, cloudy, dark, o'ercast my sky;
But when she charms my sight,
In pride of beauty's light,
When thro' my very heart
Her beaming glories dart;
'Tis then, 'tis then I wake to life and joy.

Our humble cot and hamely fare,
Ye freely shall partake o't;
That gallant badge, the dear cockade,
Ye're welcome for the sake o't.

She gazed—she redden'd like a rose—
Syne pale as ony lily;
She sank within my arms, and cried,
Art thou my ain dear Willie?
By Him, who made yon sun and sky,
By whom true love's regarded;
I am the man! and thus may still
True lovers be rewarded.

The wars are o'er, and I'm come hame,
And find thee still true-hearted;
Though poor in gear, we're rich in love,
And mair we'se ne'er be parted.
Quoth she, My grandsire left me gowd,
A mailin plenish'd fairly;
Then come, my faithfu' sodger lad,
Thou'rt welcome to it dearly.

For gold the merchant ploughs the main,
The farmer ploughs the manor;
But glory is the sodger's prize,
The sodger's wealth is honour.
The brave poor sodger ne'er despise,
Nor count him as a stranger:
Remember he's his country's stay,
In day and hour o' danger.*

THE BANKS OF NITH.

Tune—"Robie Donna Gorach."

The Thames flows proudly to the sea,
Where royal cities stand;
But sweeter flows the Nith to me,
Where Cummins ance had high command:
When shall I see that honoured land,
That winding stream I love so dear!
Must wayward fortune's adverse hand
For ever, ever keep me here.

How lovely, Nith, thy fruitful vales,
Where spreading hawthorns gaily bloom;
How sweetly wind thy sloping dales
Where lambkins wanton thro' the broom!
Tho' wandering, now, must be my doom,
Far from thy bonnie banks and braes,
May there my latest hours consume,
Amang the friends of early days!

* "Burns, I have been informed," says a clergyman of Dumfriesshire, in a letter to Mr. George Thomson, editor of Select Melodies of Scotland, "was one summer evening in the inn at Brownhill, with a couple of friends, when a poor way-worn soldier passed the window. Of a sudden it struck the poet to call him in, and get the recital of his adventures; after hearing which, he all at once fell into one of those fits of abstraction, not unusual to him. He was lifted to the region where he had his garland and his singing-robes about him, and the result was this admirable song he sent you for 'The Mill, Mill, O.'"

THE TOAST.

At a meeting of the Dumfriesshire Volunteers, held to commemorate the anniversary of Rodney's victory, April 12th, 1782, Burns was called upon for a Song, instead of which he delivered the following Lines:—

Instead of a song, boys, I'll give you a toast,
Here's the memory of those on the twelfth that we lost;—
That we lost, did I say, nay, by heav'n! that we found,
For their fame it shall last while the world goes round.
The next in succession, I'll give you the King,
Whoe'er would betray him on high may he swing;
And here's the grand fabric, our free Constitution,
As built on the base of the great Revolution;
And longer with Politics not to be cramm'd,
Be Anarchy curs'd, and be Tyranny damn'd;
And who would to Liberty e'er prove disloyal,
May his son be a hangman, and he his first trial.

THERE'LL NEVER BE PEACE TILL JAMIE COMES HAME.

This tune is sometimes called, *There's few gude Fellows when Willie's awa.*—But I never have been able to meet with any thing else of the song than the title.

Tune—"There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame."

By yon castle-wa', at the close o' the day,
I heard a man sing, though his head it was grey;
And, as he was singing, the tears down came—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

The church is in ruins, the state is in jars,
Delusions, oppressions, and murderous wars:
We daurna weel say't, but we ken wha's to blame,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

My seven braw sons for Jamie drew sword,
And now I greet round their green beds in the yird:
It brak the sweet heart o' my faithfu' auld dame—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

Now life is a burden that bows me down,
Since I tint my bairns, and he tint his crown;
But till my last moments my words are the same,—
There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.

THE STOWN GLANCE O' KINDNESS.

Tune—"Laddie, lie near me."

'Twas na her bonnie blue ee was my ruin;
Fair though she be, that was ne'er my undoin':
'Twas the dear smile when naebody did mind us,
'Twas the bewitching, sweet, stown glance o' kindness.

Sair do I fear that to hope is denied me,
Sair do I fear that despair maun abide me;
But though fell fortune should fate us to sever,
Queen shall she be in my bosom for ever.

Mary, I'm thine wi' a passion sincerest,
And thou hast plighted me love o' the dearest!
And thou'rt the angel that never can alter;
Sooner the sun in his motion shall falter.

THERE'S NEWS, LASSES.

There's news, lasses, news,
Gude news hae I to tell;
There's a boat fu' o' lads
Come to our toun to sell.

The wean wants a cradle,
And the cradle wants a cod;
And I'll no gang to my bed,
Until I get a nod.

Father, quo' she, Mother, quo' she,
Do ye what ye can,
I'll no gang to my bed
Till I get a man.
The wean, &c.

I hae as gude a craft-rig
As made o' yird and stane;
And waly fa' the ley crap,
For I maun till't again.
The wean, &c.

THE YOUNG HIGHLAND ROVER.

Tune—"Morag."

Loud blaw the frosty breezes,
The snaws the mountains cover;
Like winter on me seizes,
Since my young highland rover
Far wanders nations over.
Where'er he go, where'er he stray,
May heaven be his warden:
Return him safe to fair Strathspey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon!

The trees now naked groaning,
Shall soon wi' leaves be hinging,
The birdies dowie moaning,
Shall a' be blythely singing,
And every flower be springing.
Sae I'll rejoice the lee-lang day,
When by his mighty warden
My youth's returned to fair Strathspey,
And bonnie Castle-Gordon.*

THE WOODLARK.

Tune—"Where'll bonnie Annie lie."

Or, "Loch-Erroch Side."

O stay, sweet warbling wood-lark, stay,
Nor quit for me the trembling spray,
A helpless lover courts thy lay,
Thy soothing fond complaining.

Again, again that tender part,
That I may catch thy melting art;
For surely that wad touch her heart,
Wha kills me wi' disdaining.

Say, was thy little mate unkind,
And heard thee as the careless wind?
Oh, nocht but love and sorrow join'd,
Sic notes o' woe could wauken.

Thou tells o' never-ending care;
O' speechless grief, and dark despair:
For pity's sake, sweet bird, nae mair?
Or my poor heart is broken!

THERE'S A YOUTH IN THIS CITY.

There's a youth in this city, it were a great pity
That he from our lasses should wander awa;
For he's bonnie and braw, weel-favour'd wi' a',
And his hair has a natural buckle and a'.
His coat is the hue of his bonnet sae blue;
His fecket† is white as the new-driven snaw;
His hose they are blae, and his shoon like the slae,
And his clear siller buckles they dazzle us a.'
His coat is the hue, &c.

For beauty and fortune the laddie's been courtin;
Weel-featur'd, weel-tocher'd, weel mounted and braw;
But chiefly the siller, that gars him gang till her,
The pennie's the jewel that beautifies a'.—
There's Meg wi' the mailin, that fain wad a haen him,
And Susy whase daddy was Laird o' the ha';

* The young Highland rover is supposed to be the young Chevalier, Prince Charles Edward.
† An under-waistcoat with sleeves.

There's lang-tocher'd Nancy maist fetters his fancy,
—But the laddie's dear sel he lo'es dearest of a'.
His coat is the hue, &c.

THE TOCHER FOR ME.

Tune—"Balinamona Ora."

Awa wi' your witchcraft o' beauty's alarms,
The slender bit beauty you grasp in your arms;
O, gie me the lass that has acres o' charms,
O, gie me the lass wi' the weel-stockit farms.
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher, then hey for a lass wi' a tocher,
Then hey for a lass wi' a tocher; the nice yellow guineas for me.

Your beauty's a flower, in the morning that blows,
And withers the faster, the faster it grows;
But the rapturous charm o' the bonnie green knowes,
Ilk spring they're new deckit wi' bonnie white yowes.
Then hey, &c.

And e'en when this beauty your bosom has blest,
The brightest o' beauty may cloy, when possest;
But the sweet yellow darlings wi' Geordie imprest,
The langer ye hae them—the mair they're carest.
Then hey, &c.

THIS IS NO MY AIN LASSIE.

I see a form, I see a face,
Ye weel may wi' the fairest place:
It wants, to me, the witching grace,
The kind love that's in her ee.
O this is no my ain lassie,
Fair though the lassie be;
O weel ken I my ain lassie,
Kind love is in her ee.

She's bonnie, blooming, straight, and tall,
And lang has had my heart in thrall;
And aye it charms my very saul,
The kind love that's in her ee.
O this is no my ain lassie, &c.

A thief sae pawkie is my Jean,
To steal a blink, by a' unseen;
But gleg as light are lover's een,
When kind love is in the ee.
O this is no my ain lassie, &c.

It may escape the courtly sparks,
It may escape the learned clerks;
But weel the watching lover marks
The kind love that's in her ee.
O this is no my ain lassie, &c.

THERE WAS ONCE A DAY.

Tune—"Caledonian Hunt's Delight."

There was once a day, but old Time then was young,
That brave Caledonia, the chief of her line,
From some of your northern deities sprung,
(Who knows not that brave Caledonia's divine?)
From Tweed to the Orcades was her domain,
To hunt, or to pasture, or to do what she would:
Her heavenly relations there fixed her reign,
And pledg'd her their godheads to warrant it good.

A lambkin in peace, but a lion in war,
The pride of her kindred the heroine grew:
Her grandsire, old Odin, triumphantly swore,—
"Whoe'er shall provoke thee th' encounter shall rue!"
With tillage or pasture at times she would sport,
To feed her fair flocks by her green rustling corn;
But chiefly the woods were here fav'rite resort,
Her darling amusement, the hounds and the horn.

Long quiet she reigned; 'till thitherward steers
A flight of bold eagles from Adria's strand:*
Repeated, successive, for many long years,
They darken'd the air, and they plundered the land:
Their pounces were murder, and terror their cry,
They'd conquer'd and ruin'd a world beside:
She took to her hills and her arrows let fly,
The daring invaders they fled or they died.

The fell Harpy-raven took wing from the north,
The scourge of the seas, and the dread of the shore;†
The wild Scandinavian boar issued forth
To wanton in carnage, and wallow in gore:‡
O'er countries and kingdoms their fury prevail'd,
No arts could appease them, nor arms could repel;
But brave Caledonia in vain they assail'd,
As Largs well can witness, and Loncartie tell.§

The Cameleon-savage disturb'd her repose,
With tumult, disquiet, rebellion and strife;

* The Romans. † The Saxons. ‡ The Danes.
§ Two famous battles, in which the Danes or Norwegians were defeated.

Provoked beyond bearing, at last she arose,
And robb'd him at once of his hopes and his life :*
The Anglian lion, the terror of France,
Oft prowling, ensanguin'd the Tweed's silver flood ;
But taught by the bright Caledonian lance,
He learned to fear in his own native wood.

Thus bold, independent, unconquer'd and free,
Her bright course of glory for ever shall run :
For brave Caledonia immortal must be ;
I'll prove it from Euclid as clear as the sun :
Rectangle triangle, the figure we'll choose,
The upright is Chance, and old Time is the base ;
But brave Caledonia's the hypothenuse ;
Then ergo she'll match them, and match them always.†

THOU HAST LEFT ME EVER, JAMIE.

Tune—"Fee him, Father."

Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever ;
Thou hast left me ever, Jamie,
Thou hast left me ever.
Aften hast thou vow'd that death
Only should us sever ;
Now thou'st left thy lass for aye—
I maun see thee never, Jamie,
I'll see thee never.

Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken ;
Thou hast me forsaken, Jamie,
Thou hast me forsaken.
Thou caust love another jo,
While my heart is breaking :
Soon my weary een I'll close,
Never more to waken, Jamie,
Never more to waken.

TIBBIE, I HAE SEEN THE DAY.

THIS SONG I COMPOSED ABOUT THE AGE OF SEVENTEEN.

Tune—"Invercald's reel.

O Tibbie, I hae seen the day
Ye wadna been sae shy ;
For laik o' gear ye lightly me,
But trowth, I care na by.

Yestreen I met you on the moor,
Ye spak na, but gaed by like stoure ;
Ye geck at me because I'm poor,
But feint a hair care I.
Tibbie, I hae, &c.

I doubt na, lass, but ye may think,
Because ye hae the name o' clink,
That ye can please me at a wink,
Whene'er ye like to try.
Tibbie, I hae, &c.

But sorrow tak him that's sae mean,
Altho' his pouch o' coin were clean,
Wha follows ony saucy quean
That looks sae proud and high.
Tibbie, I hae, &c.

Altho' a lad were e'er sae smart,
If that he want the yellow dirt,
Ye'll cast your head anither airt,
An' answer him fu' dry.
Tibbie, I hae, &c.

But if he hae the name o' gear,
Ye'll fasten to him like a brier,
Tho' hardly he for sense or lear
Be better than the kye.
Tibbie, I hae, &c.

But, Tibbie, lass, tak my advice,
Your daddie's gear maks you sae nice,
The deil a ane wad speir your price,
Were ye as poor as I.
Tibbie, I hae, &c.

There lives a lass in yonder park,
I wouldna gie her in her sark
For thee wi' a' thy thousand mark ;
Ye need na look sae high.
Tibbie, I hae, &c.

TO MARY IN HEAVEN.

Thou ling'ring star, with less'ning ray,
That lov'st to greet the early morn !
Again thou usher'st in the day,
My Mary from my soul was torn.
Oh, Mary, dear departed shade !
Where is thy place of blissful rest ?
See'st thou thy lover lowly laid ?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast ?

That sacred hour can I forget ?—
Can I forget the hallow'd grove,
Where, by the winding Ayr, we met,
To live one day of parting love ?
Eternity will not efface
Those records dear of transports past ;
Thy image at our last embrace ;—
Ah ! little thought we 'twas our last !

---

* The Highlanders of the Isles.

† This singular figure of poetry, taken from the mathematics, refers to the famous proposition of Pythagoras, the 47th of Euclid. In a right-angled triangle, the square of the hypothenuse is always equal to the squares of the two other sides.

Ayr, gurgling, kiss'd his pebbled shore,
O'erhung with wild woods thickening green;
The fragrant birch, the hawthorn hoar,
Twined amorous round the raptured scene.
The flowers sprung wanton to be prest,
The birds sung love on every spray;
Till too, too soon the glowing west
Proclaim'd the speed of winged day.

Still o'er these scenes my memory wakes,
And fondly broods with miser care;
Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear.
My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of blissful rest?
See'st thou lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?*

TRUE HEARTED WAS HE.

Tune—"Bonnie Dundee."

True hearted was he, the sad swain o' the Yarrow,
And fair are the maids on the banks o' the Ayr,
But by the sweet side o' the Nith's winding river,
Are lovers as faithful, and maidens as fair;
To equal young Jessie seek Scotland all over:
To equal young Jessie you seek it in vain,
Grace, beauty and elegance fetter her lover,
And maidenly modesty fixes the chain.

O fresh is the rose in the gay, dewy morning,
And sweet is the lily at evening close;
But in the fair presence o' lovely young Jessie,
Unseen is the lily, unheeded the rose.
Love sits in her smile, a wizard ensnaring;
Enthron'd in her een he delivers his law:
And still to her charms she alone is a stranger,
Her modest demeanour's the jewel of a'.

WANDERING WILLIE.

Tune—"Here awa, there awa."

Here awa, there awa, wandering Willie!
Here awa, there awa, haud awa hame!
Come to my bosom, my ain only dearie;
Tell me thou bring'st me my Willie again.

Winter winds blew loud and cauld at our parting;
Fears for my Willie brought tears in my ee:
Welcome now, summer, and welcome, my Willie;
The summer to nature, and Willie to me.
Here awa, &c.

Rest, ye wild storms, in the caves of your slumbers!
How your dread howling a lover alarms!
Wauken, ye breezes! row gently, ye billows!
And waft my dear laddie ance mair to my arms.
Here awa, &c.

But, oh, if he's faithless, and minds na his Nannie,
Flow still between us, thou dark heaving main!
May I never see it, may I never trow it,
But, dying, believe that my Willie's my ain!
Here awa, &c.

WAE IS MY HEART.

Wae is my heart, and the tear's in my ee;
Lang, lang joy's been a stranger to me:
Forsaken and friendless my burden I bear,
And the sweet voice o' pity ne'er sounds in my ear.

Love thou hast pleasures; and deep hae I loved;
Love thou hast sorrows; and sair hae I proved:
But this bruised heart that now bleeds in my breast,
I can feel by its throbbings will soon be at rest.

O if I were, where happy I hae been;
Down by yon stream and yon bonnie castle green:
For there he is wand'ring and musing on me,
Wha wad soon dry the tear frae his Phillis's ee.

WHAT CAN A YOUNG LASSIE DO WI' AN AULD MAN.

What can a young lassie, what shall a young lassie,
What can a young lassie do wi' an auld man?
Bad luck on the pennie that tempted my minnie
To sell her poor Jenny for siller an' lan'!
Bad luck on the pennie, &c.

He's always compleenin frae mornin to e'enin,
He hosts and he hirples the weary day lang,
He's doy'lt and he's dozin, his blnid it is frozen,
O' dreary's the night wi' a crazy auld man!
Bad luck on the pennie, &c.

He hums and he hankers, he frets and he cankers;
I never can please him, do a' that I can;
He's peevish, and jealous of a' the young fellows,
O, dool on the day, I met wi' an auld man!
Bad luck on the pennie, &c.

My auld auntie Katie upon me takes pity,
I'll do my endeavour to follow her plan;
I'll cross him, and wrack him, until I heart-break him,
And then his auld brass will buy me a new pan.
Bad luck on the pennie, &c.

* To Mary Campbell, one of Burns's earliest and most beloved mistresses, a dairy-maid in the neighbourhood of Mossgiel.—See farther particulars in the Life.

WHA IS THAT AT MY BOWER DOOR.

THIS tune is also known by the name of *Lass an I come near thee.* The words are mine.

WHA is that at my bower door?
O wha is it but Findlay;—
Then gae your gate ye'se nae be here!
Indeed maun I, quo' Findlay.
What mak ye sae like a thief?
O come and see, quo' Findlay;—
Before the morn ye'll work mischief;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Gif I rise and let you in?
Let me in, quo' Findlay;—
Ye'll keep me waukin wi' your din;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.
In my bower if ye should stay?
Let me stay, quo' Findlay;—
I fear ye'll bide till break o' day;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay.

Here this night if ye remain?
I'll remain, quo' Findlay;—
I dread ye'll learn the gate again;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay;
What may pass within this bower;
Let it pass, quo' Findlay;—
Ye maun conceal 'till your last hour;
Indeed will I, quo' Findlay!

WHEN GUILDFORD GOOD:

A FRAGMENT.

Tune—"Killicrankie."

WHEN *Guildford* good our pilot stood,
And did our helm thraw, man,
Ae night, at tea, began a plea,
Within *America*, man:
Then up they gat the maskin-pat,
And in the sea did jaw, man;
An' did nae less, in full Congress,
Than quite refuse our law, man.

Then thro' the lakes *Montgomery* takes,
I wat he was na slaw, man:
Down *Lowrie's burn* he took a turn,
And *Carleton* did ca', man:
But yet, what-reck, he, at *Quebec*,
Montgomery-like did fa', man;
Wi' sword in hand, before his band,
Amang his enemies a', man.

Poor *Tammy Gage*, within a cage,
Was kept at *Boston ha'*, man;
Till *Willie Howe* took o'er the knowe
For *Philadelphia*, man:
Wi' sword an' gun he thought a sin
Guid Christian blood to draw, man;
But at *New-York*, wi' knife and fork,
Sir-loin he hacked sma', man.

Burgoyne gaed up, like spur an' whip,
Till *Fraser* brave did fa' man;
Then lost his way, ae misty day,
In *Saratoga* shaw, man.
Cornwallis fought as lang's he dought,
An' did the buckskins claw, man;
But *Clinton's* glaive frae rust to save,
He hung it to the wa', man.

Then *Montague*, an' *Guildford* too,
Began to fear a fa', man;
And *Sackville* doure, wha stood the stoure,
The German chief to thraw, man:
For Paddy *Burke*, like onie Turk,
Nae mercy had at a', man;
An' *Charlie Fox* threw by the box,
An' lows'd his tinkler jaw, man.

Then *Rockingham* took up the game;
Till death did on him ca', man;
When *Shelburne* meek held up his cheek,
Conform to gospel law, man.
Saint Stephen's boys, wi' jarring noise,
They did his measures thraw, man,
For *North* and *Fox* united stocks,
And bore him to the wa', man.

Then clubs an' hearts were *Charlie's* cartes,
He swept the stakes awa', man,
Till the diamond's ace of *Indian* race,
Led him a sair *faux pas*, man:
The Saxon lads, wi' loud placads,
On *Chatham's boy* did ca', man;
And Scotland drew her pipe, an' blew,
"Up, Willie, waur them a', man!"

Behind the throne then *Grenville's* gone,
A secret word or twa, man;
While slee *Dundas* arous'd the class
Be-north the Roman wa', man:
An' *Chatham's* wraith, in heavenly graith,
(Inspired bardies saw, man)
Wi' kindling eyes, cry'd, "*Willie*, rise!
Would I ha'e fear'd them a', man?"

But word an' blow, *North, Fox, and Co.*
Gowff'd *Willie* like a ba', man,
Till *Suthrons* raise, and coost their claise
Behind him in a raw, man;
An' *Caledon* threw by the drone,
An' did her whittle draw, man;
An' swoor fu' rude, thro' dirt and blood
To make it guid in law, man.

. . . . . .

WHERE ARE THE JOYS I HAE MET IN THE MORNING.

Tune—"Saw ye my father."

WHERE are the joys I hae met in the morning,
That danced to the lark's early song?
Where is the peace that awaited my wandering,
At evening the wild woods among?

No more a-winding the course of yon river,
And marking sweet flow'rets so fair;
No more I trace the light footsteps of pleasure,
But sorrow and sad-sighing care.

Is it that summer's forsaken our valleys,
And grim surly winter is near?
No, no, the bees humming round the gay roses,
Proclaim it the pride of the year.

Fain would I hide what I fear to discover,
Yet long, long too well have I known:
All that has caused this wreck in my bosom,
Is Jenny, fair Jenny alone.

Time cannot aid me, my griefs are immortal,
Nor Hope dare a comfort bestow:
Come then, enamour'd and fond of my anguish,
Enjoyment I'll seek in my woe.

WHISTLE AND I'LL COME TO YOU, MY LAD.

O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad,*
O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad;
Tho' father and mither and a' should gae mad,
O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad.

BUT warily tent when ye come to court me,
And come nae unless the back-yett be ajee;
Syne up the back style, and let nae body see,
And come as ye were nae comin' to me.
And come as ye were nae comin' to me.
O whistle, &c.

At kirk, or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as tho' that ye cared nae a flie;
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black e'ee,
Yet look as ye were nae lookin' at me.
Yet look as ye were nae lookin' at me.
O whistle, &c.

Aye vow and protest that ye care na for me,
And whiles ye may lightly my beauty a wee;
But court nae anither, tho' jokin ye be,
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
For fear that she wyle your fancy frae me.
O whistle, &c.

* In some of the MSS. the first four lines run thus:
O whistle and I'll come to thee, my jo,
O whistle and I'll come to thee, my jo;
Tho' father and mother and a' should say no,
O whistle and I'll come to thee, my jo.

WILLIE BREW'D A PECK O' MAUT

THIS air is Masterton's; the song mine.—The occasion of it was this:—Mr. Wm. Nicol, of the High School, Edinburgh, during the autumn vacation, being at Moffat, honest Allan, who was at that time on a visit to Dalswinton, and I went to pay Nicol a visit.—We had such a joyous meeting, that Mr. Masterton and I agreed, each in our own way, that we should celebrate the business.

O WILLIE brew'd peck o' maut,
And Rob and Allan cam to see;
Three blyther hearts, that lee-lang night,
Ye wad na find in Christendie.
We are na fou, we're na that fou,
But just a drappie in our ee;
The cock may craw, the day may daw,
And ay we'll taste the barley bree.

Here are we met, three merry boys,
Three merry boys I trou are we;
And mony a night we've merry been,
And mony mae we hope to be!
We are na fou, &c.

It is the moon, I ken her horn,
That's blinkin in the lift sae hie;
She shines sae bright to wyle us hame,
But by my sooth she'll wait a wee!
We are na fou, &c.

Wha first shall rise to gang awa',
A cuckold, coward loun is he!
Wha last beside his chair shall fa',
He is the king amang us three!
We are na fou, &c.

WILT THOU BE MY DEARIE.

Tune—"The Sutor's Dochter."

WILT thou be my dearie:
When sorrow wrings thy gentle heart,
Wilt thou let me cheer thee:
By the treasure of my soul,
That's the love I bear thee!
I swear and vow that only thou
Shall ever be my dearie.
Only thou, I swear and vow,
Shall ever be my dearie.

Lassie, say thou lo'es me;
Or if thou wilt na be my ain,
Say na thou'lt refuse me:
If it winna, canna be,
Thou for thine may choose me,
Let me, lassie, quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me;
Lassie let me quickly die,
Trusting that thou lo'es me.

WILL YE GO TO THE INDIES, MY MARY?

Tune—"The Yowe-buchts."

Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary,
And leave auld Scotia's shore?
Will ye go the Indies, my Mary,
Across the Atlantic's roar?

Oh, sweet grow the lime and the orange,
And the apple on the pine;
But a' the charms o' the Indies
Can never equal thine.

I hae sworn by the heavens, my Mary,
I hae sworn by the heavens to be true;
And sae may the heavens forget me,
When I forget my vow!

O, plight me your faith, my Mary,
And plight me your lily-white hand;
O, plight me your faith, my Mary,
Before I leave Scotia's strand.

We hae plighted our troth, my Mary,
In mutual affection to join;
And curst be the cause that shall part us!
The hour and the moment o' time!*

YON WILD MOSSY MOUNTAINS.

Yon wild mossy mountains sae lofty and wide,
That nurse in their bosom the youth o' the Clyde,
Where the grouse lead their coveys thro' the heather to feed,
And the shepherd tents his flock as he pipes on his reed:
Where the grouse, &c.

Not Gowrie's rich valley, nor Forth's sunny shores,
To me hae the charms o' yon wild, mossy moors;
For there, by a lanely, and sequester'd stream,
Resides a sweet lassie, my thought and my dream.
For there, &c.

Amang thae wild mountains shall still be my path,
Ilk stream foaming down its ain green, narrow strath;
For there, wi' my lassie, the day lang I rove,
While o'er us unheeded, flie the swift hours o' love.
For there, &c.

She is not the fairest, altho' she is fair;
O' nice education but sma' is her share;
Her parentage humble as humble can be;
But I lo'e the dear lassie because she lo'es me.
Her parentage, &c.

To beauty what man but maun yield him a prize,
In her armour of glances, and blushes, and sighs;
And when wit and refinement hae polished her darts,
They dazzle our een, as they flie to our hearts.
And when wit, &c.

But kindness, sweet kindness, in the fond sparkling e'e,
Has lustre outshining the diamond to me;
And the heart-beating love, as I'm clasp'd in her arms,
O, these are my lassie's all-conquering charms!
And the heart-beating, &c.

* When Burns was designing his voyage to the West Indies, he wrote this song as a *farewell* to a girl whom he happened to regard, at the time, with considerable admiration. He afterwards sent it to Mr. Thomson for publication in his splendid collection of the national music and musical poetry of Scotland.

YOUNG JOCKEY.

Tune—"Jockie was the blythest lad."

Young Jockey was the blithest lad
In a' our town or here awa;
Fu' blithe he whistled at the gaud,
Fu' lightly danc'd he in the ha'!
He roos'd my e'en sae bonnie blue,
He roos'd my waist sae genty sma;
An' ay my heart came to my mou,
When ne'er a body heard or saw.

My Jockey toils upon the plain,
Thro' wind and weet, thro' frost and snaw
And o'er the lee I leuk fu' fain
When Jockey's owsen hameward ca'.
An' ay the night comes round again,
When in his arms he taks me a';
An' ay he vows he'll be my ain
As lang's he has a breath to draw.

YOUNG PEGGY

Young Peggy blooms our bonniest lass,
Her blush is like the morning,
The rosy dawn, the springing grass,
With early gems adorning:
Her eyes outshine the radiant beams
That gild the passing shower,
And glitter o'er the crystal streams,
And cheer each fresh'ning flower.

Her lips more than the cherries bright,
A richer die has grac'd them,
They charm th' admiring gazer's sight
And sweetly tempt to taste them:

Her smile is as the ev'ning mild,
When feather'd pairs are courting,
And little lambkins wanton wild,
In playful bands disporting.

Were Fortune lovely Peggy's foe,
Such sweetness would relent her,
As blooming spring unbends the brow
Of surly, savage winter.
Detraction's eye no aim can gain
Her winning pow'rs to lessen:
And fretful envy grins in vain,
The poison'd tooth to fasten.

Ye pow'rs of Honour, Love, and Truth,
From ev'ry ill defend her;
Inspire the highly favour'd youth
The destinies intend her;
Still fan the sweet connubial flame
Responsive in each bosom;
And bless the dear parental name
With many a filial blossom.*

* This was one of the poet's earliest compositions. It is copied from a MS. book, which he had before his first publication.

CORRESPONDENCE

OF

ROBERT BURNS

THE CORRESPONDENCE.

NOTICE.

Of the following letters of Burns, a considerable number were transmitted for publication, by the individuals to whom they were addressed; but very few have been printed entire. It will easily be believed, that in a series of letters written without the least view to publication, various passages were found unfit for the press, from different considerations. It will also be readily supposed, that our Poet, writing nearly at the same time, and under the same feelings to different individuals, would sometimes fall into the same train of sentiment and forms of expression. To avoid, therefore, the tediousness of such repetitions, it has been found necessary to mutilate many of the individual letters, and sometimes to exscind parts of great delicacy—the unbridled effusions of panegyric and regard. But though many of the letters are printed from originals furnished by the persons to whom they were addressed, others are printed from first draughts, or sketches, found among the papers of our Bard. Though in general no man committed his thoughts to his correspondents with less consideration or effort than Burns, yet it appears that in some instances he was dissatisfied with his first essays, and wrote out his communications in a fairer character, or perhaps in more studied language. In the chaos of his manuscripts, some of the original sketches were found; and as these sketches, though less perfect, are fairly to be considered as the offspring of his mind, where they have seemed in themselves worthy of a place in this volume, and they have been inserted, though they may not always correspond exactly with the letters transmitted, which have been lost or withheld.

Our author appears at one time to have formed an intention of making a collection of his letters for the amusement of a friend. Accordingly he copied an inconsiderable number of them into a book, which he presented to Robert Riddel, of Glenriddel, Esq. Among these was the account of his life, addressed to Dr. Moore, and printed in the Life. In copying from his imperfect sketches (it does not appear that he had the letters actually sent to his correspondents before him) he seems to have occasionally enlarged his observations, and altered his expressions. In such instances his emendations have been adopted; but in truth there are but five of the letters thus selected by the poet, to be found in the present volume, the rest being thought of inferior merit, or otherwise unfit for the public eye.

In printing this volume, the Editor has found some corrections of grammar necessary; but these have been very few, and such as may be supposed to occur in the careless effusions, even of literary characters, who have not been in the habit of carrying their compositions to the press. These corrections have never been extended to any habitual modes of expression of the Poet, even where his phraseology may seem to violate the delicacies of taste; or the idiom of our language, which he wrote in general with great accuracy. Some difference will indeed be found in this respect in his earlier and in his later compositions; and this volume will exhibit the progress of his style, as well as the history of his mind. In this Edition, several new letters were introduced not in Dr. Currie's Edition, and which have been taken from the works of Cromek and the more recent publishers. The series commences with the Bard's *Love Letters* —the first four being of that description. They were omitted from Dr. Currie's Edition: why, has not been explained. They have been held to be sufficiently interesting to be here inserted. He states the issue of the courtship in these terms: —"To crown my distresses, a *belle fille* whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me with peculiar circumstances of mortification." Mr. Lockhart remarks of the letters:—"They are surely as well worth preserving, as many in the Collection; particularly when their early date is considered."—He then quotes from them largely, and adds,—"In such excellent English did Burns woo his country maidens, in at most his 20th year." But we suspect the fault of the English was, that it was too good. It was too coldly correct to suit the taste of the fair maiden: had the wooer used a sprinkling of his native tongue, with a deeper infusion of his constitutional enthusiasm, he might have had more success.

LETTERS, &c.

LOVE LETTERS.

No. I.

(WRITTEN ABOUT THE YEAR 1780.)

I VERILY believe, my dear Eliza, that the pure genuine feelings of love, are as rare in the world as the pure genuine principles of virtue and piety. This, I hope, will account for the uncommon style of all my letters to you. By uncommon, I mean, their being written in such a serious manner, which, to tell you the truth, has made me often afraid lest you should take me for a zealous bigot, who conversed with his mistress as he would converse with his minister. I don't know how it is, my dear; for though, except your company, there is nothing on earth that gives me so much pleasure as writing to you, yet it never gives me those giddy raptures so much talked of among lovers. I have often thought, that if a well-grounded affection be not really a part of virtue, 'tis something extremely a-kin to it. Whenever the thought of my Eliza warms my heart, every feeling of humanity, every principle of generosity, kindles in my breast. It extinguishes every dirty spark of malice and envy, which are but too apt to infest me. I grasp every creature in the arms of universal benevolence, and equally participate in the pleasures of the happy, and sympathise with the miseries of the unfortunate. I assure you, my dear, I often look up to the divine Disposer of events, with an eye of gratitude for the blessing which I hope he intends to bestow on me, in bestowing you. I sincerely wish that he may bless my endeavours to make your life as comfortable and happy as possible, both in sweetening the rougher parts of my natural temper, and bettering the unkindly circumstances of my fortune. This, my dear, is a passion, at least in my view, worthy of a man, and I will add, worthy of a Christian. The sordid earth-worm may profess love to a woman's person, whilst, in reality, his affection is centered in her pocket; and the slavish drudge may go a-wooing as he goes to the horse-market, to choose one who is stout and firm, and, as we may say of an old horse, one who will be a good drudge and draw kindly. I disdain their dirty, puny ideas. I would be heartily out of humour with myself, if I thought I were capable of having so poor a notion of the sex, which were designed to crown the pleasures of society. Poor devils! I don't envy them their happiness who have such notions. For my part, I propose quite other pleasures with my dear partner. . . . . .

No. II.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I DO not remember in the course of your acquaintance and mine, ever to have heard your opinion on the ordinary way of falling in love, amongst people of our station of life: I do not mean the persons who proceed in the way of bargain, but those whose affection is really placed on the person.

Though I be, as you know very well, but a very awkward lover myself, yet as I have some opportunities of observing the conduct of others who are much better skilled in the affair of courtship than I am, I often think it is owing to lucky chance more than to good management, that there are not more unhappy marriages than usually are.

It is natural for a young fellow to like the acquaintance of the females, and customary for him to keep them company when occasion serves; some one of them is more agreeable to him than the rest; there is something, he knows not what, pleases him, he knows not how, in her company. This I take to be what is called love with the greatest part of us, and I must own, my dear Eliza, it is a hard game such a one as you have to play when you meet with such a lover. You cannot refuse but he is sincere, and yet though you use him ever so favourably, perhaps in a few months, or at farthest in a year or two, the same unaccountable fancy may make him as distractedly fond of another, whilst you are quite forgot. I am aware, that perhaps the next time I have the pleasure of seeing you, you may bid me take my own lesson home, and tell me that the passion I have professed for you is perhaps one of those transient flashes I have

been describing; but I hope, my dear Eliza, you will do me the justice to believe me, when I assure you, that the love I have for you is founded on the sacred principles of virtue and honour, and by consequence, so long as you continue possessed of those amiable qualities which first inspired my passion for you, so long must I continue to love you. Believe me, my dear, it is love like this alone which can render the married state happy. People may talk of flames and raptures as long as they please; and a warm fancy with a flow of youthful spirits, may make them feel something like what they describe; but sure I am, the nobler faculties of the mind, with kindred feelings of the heart, can only be the foundation of friendship, and it has always been my opinion, that the married life was only friendship in a more exalted degree.

If you will be so good as to grant my wishes, and it should please providence to spare us to the latest periods of life, I can look forward and see, that even then, though bent down with wrinkled age; even then, when all other worldly circumstances will be indifferent to me, I will regard my Eliza with the tenderest affection, and for this plain reason, because she is still possessed of those noble qualities, improved to a much higher degree, which first inspired my affection for her.

"O! happy state, when souls each other draw,
"When love is liberty, and nature law."

I know, were I to speak in such a style to many a girl who thinks herself possessed of no small share of sense, she would think it ridiculous—but the language of the heart is, my dear Eliza, the only courtship I shall ever use to you.

When I look over what I have written, I am sensible it is vastly different from the ordinary style of courtship—but I shall make no apology—I know your good nature will excuse what your good sense may see amiss.

No. III.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR ELIZA,

I HAVE often thought it a peculiarly unlucky circumstance in love, that though, in every other situation in life, telling the truth is not only the safest, but actually by far the easiest way of proceeding, a lover is never under greater difficulty in acting, or more puzzled for expression, than when his passion is sincere, and his intentions are honourable. I do not think that it is very difficult for a person of ordinary capacity to talk of love and fondness, which are not felt, and to make vows of constancy and fidelity, which are never intended to be performed, if he be villain enough to practise such detestable conduct: but to a man whose heart glows with the principles of integrity and truth; and who sincerely loves a woman of amiable person, uncommon refinement of sentiment, and purity of manners—to such a one, in such circumstances, I can assure you, my dear, from my own feelings at this present moment, courtship is a task indeed. There is such a number of foreboding fears, and distrustful anxieties crowd into my mind when I am in your company, or when I sit down to write to you, that what to speak or what to write I am altogether at a loss.

There is one rule which I have hitherto practised, and which I shall invariably keep with you, and that is, honestly to tell you the plain truth. There is something so mean and unmanly in the arts of dissimulation and falsehood, that I am surprised they can be used by any one in so noble, so generous a passion as virtuous love. No, my dear Eliza, I shall never endeavour to gain your favour by such detestable practices. If you will be so good and so generous as to admit me for your partner, your companion, your bosom friend through life; there is nothing on this side of eternity shall give me greater transport; but I shall never think of purchasing your hand by any arts unworthy of a man, and I will add of a Christian. There is one thing, my dear, which I earnestly request of you, and it is this; that you would soon either put an end to my hopes by a peremptory refusal, or cure me of my fears by a generous consent.

It would oblige me much if you would send me a line or two when convenient. I shall only add further, that if a behaviour regulated (though perhaps but very imperfectly) by the rules of honour and virtue, if a heart devoted to love and esteem you, and an earnest endeavour to promote your happiness; and if these are qualities you would wish in a friend, in a husband; I hope you shall ever find them in your real friend and sincere lover.

No. IV.

TO THE SAME.

I OUGHT in good manners to have acknowledged the receipt of your letter before this time, but my heart was so shocked with the contents of it, that I can scarcely yet collect my thoughts so as to write to you on the subject. I will not attempt to describe what I felt on receiving your letter. I read it over and over, again and again, and though it was in the politest language of refusal, still it was peremptory; "you were sorry you could not make me a return, but you wish me" what, without you, I never can obtain, "you wish me all kind of happiness." It would be weak and unmanly to say, that without you I never can be happy; but sure I am, that shar-

ing life with you, would have given it a relish, that, wanting you, I never can taste.

Your uncommon personal advantages, and your superior good sense, do not so much strike me; these, possibly in a few instances, may be met with in others; but that amiable goodness, that tender feminine softness, that endearing sweetness of disposition, with all the charming offspring of a warm feeling heart—these I never again expect to meet with in such a degree in this world. All these charming qualities, heightened by an education much beyond any thing I have ever met with in any woman I ever dared to approach, have made an impression on my heart that I do not think the world can ever efface. My imagination has fondly flattered itself with a wish, I dare not say it ever reached a hope, that possibly I might one day call you mine. I had formed the most delightful images, and my fancy fondly brooded over them; but now I am wretched for the loss of what I really had no right expect. I must now think no more of you as a mistress, still I presume to ask to be admitted as a friend. As such I wish to be allowed to wait on you, and as I expect to remove in a few days a little farther off, and you, I suppose, will perhaps soon leave this place, I wish to see you or hear from you soon; and if an expression should perhaps escape me rather too warm for friendship, I hope you will pardon it in, my dear Miss ——, (pardon me the dear expression for once.) . . . . . .

LETTERS, 1783, 1784.

No. V.

TO MR. JOHN MURDOCH,

SCHOOLMASTER,

STAPLES INN BUILDINGS, LONDON.

DEAR SIR, *Lochlee, 15th January,* 1783.

As I have an opportunity of sending you a letter, without putting you to that expense which any production of mine would but ill repay, I embrace it with pleasure, to tell you that I have not forgotten, nor ever will forget, the many obligations I lie under to your kindness and friendship.

I do not doubt, Sir, but you will wish to know what has been the result of all the pains of an indulgent father, and a masterly teacher; and I wish I could gratify your curiosity with such a recital as you would be pleased with; but that is what I am afraid will not be the case. I have, indeed, kept pretty clear of vicious habits; and in this respect, I hope, my conduct will not disgrace the education I have gotten; but as a man of the world, I am most miserably deficient.—One would have thought, that bred as I have been, under a father who has figured pretty well as *un homme des affaires*, I might have been what the world calls a pushing, active fellow; but, to tell you the truth, Sir, there is hardly any thing more my reverse. I seem to be one sent into the world to see, and observe; and I very easily compound with the knave who tricks me of my money, if there be any thing original about him which shows me human nature in a different light from any thing I have seen before. In short, the joy of my heart is to "study men, their manners, and their ways;" and for this darling subject, I cheerfully sacrifice every other consideration. I am quite indolent about those great concerns that set the bustling busy sons of care agog; and if I have to answer for the present hour, I am very easy with regard to any thing further. Even the last, worst shift * of the unfortunate and the wretched, does not much terrify me: I know that even then my talent for what country folks call "a sensible crack," when once it is sanctified by a hoary head, would procure me so much esteem, that even then—I would learn to be happy. However, I am under no apprehensions about that; for, though indolent, yet, so far as an extremely delicate constitution permits, I am not lazy; and in many things, especially in tavern matters, I am a strict economist; not indeed for the sake of the money, but one of the principal parts in my composition is a kind of pride of stomach, and I scorn to fear the face of any man living: above every thing, I abhor as hell, the idea of sneaking in a corner to avoid a dun—possibly some pitiful, sordid wretch, who in my heart I despise and detest. 'Tis this, and this alone, that endears economy to me. In the matter of books, indeed, I am very profuse. My favourite authors are of the sentimental kind, such as *Shenstone*, particularly his *Elegies; Thomson; Man of Feeling*, a book I prize next to the Bible; *Man of the World; Sterne*, especially his *Sentimental Journey; Macpherson's Ossian, &c.* These are the glorious models after which I endeavour to form my conduct; and 'tis incogruous, 'tis absurd, to suppose that the man whose mind glows with sentiments lightened up at their sacred flame—the man whose heart distends with benevolence to all the human race—he "who can soar above this little scene of things," can he descend to mind the paltry concerns about which the terræ-filial race fret, and fume, and vex themselves? O how the glorious triumph swells my heart! I forget that I am a poor insignificant devil, unnoticed and unknown, stalking up and down fairs and markets, when I happen to be in them, reading a page or two of mankind, and "catching the manners living as they rise," whilst the men of business jostle me on every side as an idle encumbrance in their way.—But I dare say I have by this time tired your patience; so I shall conclude with begging you to give Mrs.

* The last shift alluded to here, must be the condition of an itinerant beggar

Murdoch—not my compliments, for that is a mere common-place story, but—my warmest, kindest wishes for her welfare; and accept of the same for yourself, from,

Dear Sir,
Yours, &c.

No VI.

[THE FOLLOWING IS TAKEN FROM THE MS. PROSE PRESENTED BY OUR BARD TO MR. RIDDEL.]

On rummaging over some old papers, I lighted on a MS. of my early years, in which I had determined to write myself out, as I was placed by fortune among a class of men to whom my ideas would have been nonsense. I had meant that the book should have lain by me, in the fond hope that, some time or other, even after I was no more, my thoughts would fall into the hands of somebody capable of appreciating their value. It sets off thus:

Observations, Hints, Songs, Scraps of Poetry, &c. by R. B.—a man who had little art in making money, and still less in keeping it; but was, however, a man of some sense, and a great deal of honesty, and unbounded good-will to every creature, rational and irrational. As he was but little indebted to scholastic education, and bred at a plough-tail, his performances must be strongly tinctured with his unpolished rustic way of life; but as I believe they are really his *own*, it may be some entertainment to a curious observer of human nature, to see how a ploughman thinks and feels, under the pressure of love, ambition, anxiety, grief, with the like cares and passions, which, however diversified by the *modes* and *manners* of life, operate pretty much alike, I believe, on all the species.

"There are numbers in the world who do not want sense to make a figure, so much as an opinion of their own abilities, to put them upon recording their observations, and allowing them the same importance which they do to those which appear in print."—SHENSTONE.

"Pleasing, when youth is long expired, to trace
The forms our pencil, or our pen designed!
Such was our youthful air, and shape, and face,
Such the soft image of our youthful mind."
Ibid.

April, 1783.

Notwithstanding all that has been said against love, respecting the folly and weakness it leads a young inexperienced mind into; still I think it in a great measure deserves the highest encomiums that have been passed on it. If any thing on earth deserves the name of rapture or transport, it is the feelings of green eighteen, in the company of the mistress of his heart, when she repays him with an equal return of affection.

. . . . . .

August.

There is certainly some connection between love, and music, and poetry; and, therefore, I have always thought a fine touch of nature, that passage in a modern love composition:

"As tow'rd her cot, he jogg'd along,
Her name was frequent in his song."

For my own part, I never had the least thought or inclination of turning poet, till I got once heartily in love; and then rhyme and song were, in a manner, the spontaneous language of my heart.

September.

I entirely agree with that judicious philosopher, Mr. Smith, in his excellent *Theory of Moral Sentiments*, that remorse is the most painful sentiment that can embitter the human bosom. Any ordinary pitch of fortitude may bear up tolerably well, under those calamities, in the procurement of which we ourselves have had no hand; but when our follies or crimes have made us miserable and wretched, to bear up with manly firmness, and at the same time have a proper penitential sense of our misconduct, is a glorious effort of self-command.

Of all the numerous ills that hurt our peace,
That press the soul, or wring the mind with anguish,
Beyond comparison the worst are those
That to our folly or our guilt we owe.
In every other circumstance, the mind
Has this to say—"It was no deed of mine;"
But when to all the evil of misfortune
This sting is added—"Blame thy foolish self!"
Or worser far, the pangs of keen remorse;
The torturing, gnawing consciousness of guilt—
Of guilt, perhaps, where we've involved others,
The young, the innocent, who fondly loved us.
Nay, more, that very love their cause of ruin!
O burning hell! in all thy store of torments,
There's not a keener lash!
Lives there a man so firm, who, while his heart
Feels all the bitter horrors of his crime,
Can reason down its agonizing throbs;
And, after proper purpose of amendment,
Can firmly force his jarring thoughts to peace!
O, happy! happy! enviable man!
O glorious magnanimity of soul.

. . . . . .

March, 1784.

I have often observed, in the course of my experience of human life, that every man, even the worst, has something good about him; though very often nothing else than a happy

temperament of constitution inclining him to this or that virtue. For this reason, no man can say in what degree any other person, besides himself, can be, with strict justice, called *wicked*. Let any of the strictest character for regularity of conduct among us, examine impartially how many vices he has never been guilty of, not from any care or vigilance, but for want of opportunity, or some accidental circumstance intervening; how many of the weaknesses of mankind he has escaped, because he was out of the line of such temptation; and, what often, if not always weighs more than all the rest, how much he is indebted to the world's good opinion, because the world does not know all: I say, any man who can thus think, will scan the failings, nay, the faults and crimes, of mankind around him, with a brother's eye.

I have often courted the acquaintance of that part of mankind commonly known by the ordinary phrase of *blackguards*, sometimes farther than was consistent with the safety of my character; those who, by thoughtless prodigality or headstrong passions, have been driven to ruin. Though disgraced by follies, nay, sometimes "stained with guilt, ... ," I have yet found among them, in not a few instances, some of the noblest virtues, magnanimity, generosity, disinterested friendship, and even modesty.

. . . . . .

April.

As I am what the men of the world, if they knew such a man, would call a whimsical mortal, I have various sources of pleasure and enjoyment, which are, in a manner, *peculiar* to myself, or some here and there such other out-of-the-way person. Such is the peculiar pleasure I take in the season of winter, more than the rest of the year. This, I believe, may be partly owing to my misfortunes giving my mind a melancholy cast: but there is something even in the

"Mighty tempest, and the hoary waste
Abrupt and deep, stretch'd o'er the buried earth,"—

which raises the mind to a serious sublimity, favourable to every thing great and noble. There is scarcely any earthly object gives me more—I do not know if I should call it pleasure—but something which exalts me, something which enraptures me—than to walk in the sheltered side of the wood, or high plantation, in a cloudy winter-day, and hear the stormy wind howling among the trees, and raving over the plain. It is my best season for devotion: my mind is wrapt up in a kind of enthusiasm to *Him*, who, in the pompous language of the Hebrew bard, "walks on the wings of the wind." In one of these seasons, just after a train of misfortunes, I composed the following:

The wintry west extends his blast, &c.
See Songs.

Shenstone finely observes, that love-verses, writ without any real passion, are the most nauseous of all conceits; and I have often thought that no man can be a proper critic of love-composition, except he himself, in one or more instances, have been a warm votary of this passion. As I have been all along a miserable dupe to love, and have been led into a thousand weaknesses and follies by it, for that reason I put the more confidence in my critical skill, in distinguishing foppery, and conceit, from real passion and nature. Whether the following song will stand the test, I will not pretend to say, because it is my own; only I can say it was at the time, genuine from the heart.

Behind yon hills, &c.
See Songs.

I think the whole species of young men may be naturally enough divided into two grand classes, which I shall call the *grave* and the *merry*; though, by the bye, these terms do not with propriety enough express my ideas. The grave I shall cast into the usual division of those who are goaded on by the love of money, and those whose darling wish is to make a figure in the world. The merry are, the men of pleasure of all denominations; the jovial lads, who have too much fire and spirit to have any settled rule of action; but without much deliberation, follow the strong impulses of nature; the thoughtless, the careless, the indolent—in particular *he*, who, with a happy sweetness of natural temper, and a cheerful vacancy of thought, steals through life—generally, indeed, in poverty and obscurity; but poverty and obscurity are only evils to him who can sit gravely down and make a repining comparison between his own situation and that of others; and lastly to grace the quorum, such are, generally, those heads are capable of all the towerings of genius, and whose hearts are warmed with all the delicacy of feeling.

. . . . . .

As the grand end of human life is to cultivate an intercourse with that *Being* to whom we owe life, with every enjoyment that can render life delightful; and to maintain an integritive conduct towards our fellow-creatures; that so, by forming piety and virtue into habit, we may be fit members for that society of the pious and the good, which reason and revelation teach us to expect beyond the grave: I do not see that the turn of mind, and pursuits of any son of poverty and obscurity, are in the least more inimi-

cal to the sacred interests of piety and virtue, than the, even lawful, bustling and straining after the world's riches and honours; and I do not see but that he may gain Heaven as well (which, by the bye, is no mean consideration), who steals through the vale of life, amusing himself with every little flower that fortune throws in his way; as he who, straining straight forward, and perhaps bespattering all about him, gains some of life's little eminences; where, after all, he can only see, and be seen, a little more conspicuously, than what, in the pride of his heart, he is apt to term the poor, indolent devil he has left behind him.

. . . . . .

There is a noble sublimity, a heart-melting tenderness, in some of our ancient ballads, which shows them to be the work of a masterly hand: and it has often given me many a heart-ache to reflect, that such glorious old bards—bards who very probably owed all their talents to native genius, yet have described the exploits of heroes, the pangs of disappointment, and the meltings of love, with such fine strokes of nature—that their very names (O how mortifying to a bard's vanity!) are now "buried among the wreck of things which were."

O ye illustrious names unknown! who could feel so strongly and describe so well; the last, the meanest of the muses' train—one who, though far inferior to your flights, yet eyes your path, and with trembling wing would sometimes soar after you—a poor rustic bard unknown, pays this sympathetic pang to your memory! Some of you tell us, with all the charms of verse, that you have been unfortunate in the world—unfortunate in love: he too has felt the loss of his little fortune, the loss of friends, and, worse than all, the loss of the woman he adored. Like you, all his consolation was his muse: she taught him in rustic measures to complain. Happy could he have done it with your strength of imagination and flow of verse! May the turf lie lightly on your bones! and may you now enjoy that solace and rest which this world seldom gives to the heart, tuned to all the feelings of poesy and love!

. . . . . .

This is all worth quoting in my MSS., and more than all.

R. B.

LETTERS, 1786.

No. VII.

TO MR. JOHN RICHMOND, EDINBURGH.

MY DEAR SIR, *Mossgiel, Feb.* 17, 1786.

I HAVE not time at present to upbraid you for your silence and neglect; I shall only say I received yours with great pleasure. I have enclosed you a piece of rhyming ware for your perusal. I have been very busy with the muses since I saw you, and have composed, among several others, *The Ordination*, a poem on Mr. M'Kinlay's being called to Kilmarnock; *Scotch Drink*, a poem; *The Cotter's Saturday Night; An Address to the Devil*, &c. I have likewise completed my poem on the *Dogs*, but have not shewn it to the world. My chief patron now is Mr. Aiken in Ayr, who is pleased to express great approbation of my works. Be so good as send me Fergusson, by Connel,* and I will remit you the money. I have no news to acquaint you with about Mauchline, they are just going on in the old way. I have some very important news with respect to myself, not the most agreeable, news that I am sure you cannot guess, but I shall give you the particulars another time. I am extremely happy with Smith;† he is the only friend I have *now* in Mauchline. I can scarcely forgive your long neglect of me, and I beg you will let me hear from you regularly by Connel. If you would act your part as a FRIEND, I am sure neither *good* nor *bad* fortune should strange or alter me. Excuse haste, as I got yours but yesterday.—I am,

My dear Sir,
Yours,
ROBT. BURNESS.‡

No. VIII.

TO MR. M'WHINNIE, WRITER, AYR.

Mossgiel, 17th April, 1786.

IT is injuring *some* hearts, those hearts that *elegantly* bear the impression of the good Creator, to say to them you give them the trouble of obliging a friend; for this reason, I only tell you that I gratify my *own* feelings in requesting your friendly offices with respect to the enclosed, because I know it will gratify *yours* to assist me in it to the utmost of your power.

I have sent you four copies, as I have no less than eight dozen, which is a great deal more than I shall ever need.

Be sure to remember a poor poet militant in your prayers. He looks forward with fear and trembling to that, to him, important moment

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* *Connel*—the Mauchline carrier.

† Mr. *James Smith*, then a shop-keeper in Mauchline. It was to this young man that Burns addressed one of his finest performances—"To J. S——" beginning

"Dear S——, the sleest, paukie thief."

He died in the West-Indies.

‡ This is the only letter the Editor has met with in which the Poet adds the termination *ess* to his name, as his father and family had spelled it.

which stamps the *die* with—with—with, perhaps the eternal disgrace of,

My dear Sir,
You humbled,
afflicted,
tormented
ROBr. BURNS.

No. IX.

TO MONS. JAMES SMITH, Mauchline.

Monday Morning, Mossgiel, 1786.

MY DEAR SIR,

I WENT to Dr. Douglas yesterday fully resolved to take the opportunity of Capt. Smith; but I found the Doctor with a Mr. and Mrs. White, both Jamaicans, and they have deranged my plans altogether. They assure him that to send me from Savannah la Mar to Port Antonio will cost my master, Charles Douglas, upwards of fifty pounds; besides running the risk of throwing myself into a pleuritic fever in consequence of hard travelling in the sun. On these accounts, he refuses sending me with Smith, but a vessel sails from Greenock the first of Sept. right for the place of my destination. The Captain of her is an intimate of Mr. Gavin Hamilton's, and as good a fellow as heart could wish: with him I am destined to go. Where I shall shelter, I know not, but I hope to weather the storm. Perish the drop of blood of mine that fears them! I know their worst, and am prepared to meet it.—

I'll laugh, an' sing, an' shake my leg,
As lang's I dow.

On Thursday morning, if you can muster as much self-denial as to be out of bed about seven o'clock, I shall see you as I ride through to Cumnock. After all, Heaven bless the sex! I feel there is still happiness for me among them.—

O woman, lovely woman! Heaven designed you
To temper man! we had been brutes without you!

No. X.

TO MR. DAVID BRICE.

DEAR BRICE, *Mossgiel, June* 12, 1786.

I RECEIVED your message by G. Paterson, and as I am not very throng at present, I just write to let you know that there is such a worthless, rhyming reprobate, as your humble servant, still in the land of the living, though I can scarcely say, in the place of hope. I have no news to tell you that will give me any pleasure to mention or you to hear.

. . . . . .

And now for a grand cure; the ship is on her way home that is to take me out to Jamaica; and then, farewell dear old Scotland, and farewell dear ungrateful Jean, for never, never will I see you more.

You will have heard that I am going to commence *Poet* in print; and to-morrow my works go to the press. I expect it will be a volume of about two hundred pages—it is just the last foolish action I intend to do; and then turn a wise man as *fast as possible.*

Believe me to be,
Dear Brice,
Your friend and well-wisher.

No. XI.

TO MR. AIKEN

(THE GENTLEMAN TO WHOM THE COTTER'S SATURDAY NIGHT IS ADDRESSED.)

SIR, *Ayrshire,* 1786.

I WAS with Wilson, my printer, t'other day, and settled all our by-gone matters between us. After I had paid him all demands, I made him the offer of the second edition, on the hazard of being paid out of the *first and readiest,* which he declines. By his account, the paper of a thousand copies would cost about twenty-seven pounds, and the printing about fifteen or sixteen: he offers to agree to this for the printing, if I will advance for the paper; but this you know, is out of my power; so farewell hopes of a second edition till I grow richer!—an epocha which, I think, will arrive at the payment of the British national debt.

There is scarcely any thing hurts me so much in being disappointed of my second edition, as not having it in my power to show my gratitude to Mr. Ballantyne, by publishing my poem of *The Brigs of Ayr.* I would detest myself as a wretch, if I thought I were capable, in a very long life, of forgetting the honest, warm, and tender delicacy with which he enters into my interests. I am sometimes pleased with myself in my grateful sensations; but I believe, on the whole, I have very little merit in it, as my gratitude is not a virtue, the consequence of reflection, but sheerly the instinctive emotion of a heart too inattentive to allow worldly maxims and views to settle into selfish habits.

I have been feeling all the various rotations and movements within, respecting the excise. There are many things plead strongly against it; the uncertainty of getting soon into business, the consequences of my follies, which may perhaps make it impracticable for me to stay at home;

and besides, I have for some time been pining under secret wretchedness, from causes which you pretty well know—the pang of disappointment, the sting of pride, with some wandering stabs of remorse, which never fail to settle on my vitals like vultures, when attention is not called away by the calls of society or the vagaries of the muse. Even in the hour of social mirth, my gaiety is the madness of an intoxicated criminal under the hands of the executioner. All these reasons urge me to go abroad; and to all these reasons I have only one answer—the feelings of a father. This, in the present mood I am in, overbalances every thing that can be laid in the scale against it.

. . . . . .

You may perhaps think it an extravagant fancy, but it is a sentiment which strikes home to my very soul: though sceptical, in some points, of our current belief, yet, I think, I have every evidence for the reality of a life beyond the stinted bourne of our present existence; if so, then how should I, in the presence of that tremendous Being, the Author of existence, how should I meet the reproaches of those who stand to me in the dear relation of children, whom I deserted in the smiling innocency of helpless infancy? O, thou great unknown Power! thou Almighty God! who hast lighted up reason in my breast, and blessed me with immortality! I have frequently wandered from that order and regularity necessary for the perfection of thy works, yet thou hast never left me nor forsaken me!

. . . . . .

Since I wrote the foregoing sheet, I have seen something of the storm of mischief thickening over my folly-devoted head. Should you, my friends, my benefactors, be successful in your applications for me, perhaps it may not be in my power in that way to reap the fruit of your friendly efforts. What I have written in the preceding pages is the settled tenor of my present resolution; but should inimical circumstances forbid me closing with your kind offer, or, enjoying it, only threaten to entail farther misery—

. . . . . .

To tell the truth, I have little reason for this last complaint, as the world, in general, has been kind to me, fully up to my deserts. I was, for some time past, fast getting into the pining distrustful snarl of the misanthrope. I saw myself alone, unfit for the struggle of life, shrinking at every rising cloud in the chance-directed atmosphere of fortune, while, all defenceless, I looked about in vain for a cover. It never occurred to me, at least never with the force it deserved, that this world is a busy scene, and man a creature destined for a progressive struggle; and that, however I might possess a warm heart and inoffensive manners (which last, by the bye, was rather more than I could well boast), still, more than these passive qualities, there was something to be *done*. When all my school-fellows and youthful compeers (those misguided few excepted, who joined, to use a Gentoo phrase, the *hallachores* of the human race), were striking off with eager hope and earnest intent on some one or other of the many paths of busy life, I was "standing idle in the market place," or only left the chase of the butterfly from flower to flower, to hunt fancy from whim to whim.

. . . . . .

You see, Sir, that if to *know* one's errors were a probability of *mending* them, I stand a fair chance; but, according to the reverend Westminster divines, though conviction must precede conversion, it is very far from always implying it. *

. . . . . .

No. XII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

MADAM, *Ayrshire*, 1786.

I AM truly sorry I was not at home yesterday, when I was so much honoured with your order for my copies, and incomparably more by the handsome compliments you are pleased to pay my poetic abilities. I am fully persuaded that there is not any class of mankind so feelingly alive to the titillations of applause as the sons of Parnassus; nor is it easy to conceive how the heart of the poor bard dances with rapture, when those whose character in life gives them a right to be polite judges, honour him with their approbation. Had you been thoroughly acquainted with me, Madam, you could not have touched my darling heart-chord more sweetly than by noticing my attempts to celebrate your illustrious ancestor, the *Saviour of his Country*.

"Great, patriot hero! ill-requited chief."

The first book I met with in my early years, which I perused with pleasure, was *The Life of Hannibal:* the next was *The History of Sir William Wallace:* for several of my earlier years I had few other authors; and many a solitary hour have I stole out, after the laborious vocations of the day, to shed a tear over their glorious but unfortunate stories. In those boyish days I remember in particular being

* This letter was evidently written under the distress of mind occasioned by our Poet's separation from Mrs. Burns.

struck with that part of Wallace's story where these lines occur—

"Syne to the Leglen wood, when it was late,
To make a silent and a safe retreat."

I chose a fine summer Sunday, the only day my line of life allowed, and walked half a dozen of miles to pay my respects to the Leglen wood, with as much devout enthusiasm as ever pilgrim did to Loretto; and, as I explored every den and dell where I could suppose my heroic countryman to have lodged, I recollect (for even then I was a rhymer), that my heart glowed with a wish to be able to make a song on him in some measure equal to his merits.

No. XIII.

TO MRS. STEWART, OF STAIR.

MADAM, 1786.

THE hurry of my preparations for going abroad has hindered me from performing my promise so soon as I intended. I have here sent you a parcel of songs, &c. which never made their appearance, except to a friend or two at most. Perhaps some of them may be no great entertainment to you: but of that I am far from being an adequate judge. The song to the tune of *Ettrick Banks*, you will easily see the impropriety of exposing much even in manuscript. I think, myself, it has some merit, both as a tolerable description of one of Nature's sweetest scenes, a July evening, and one of the finest pieces of Nature's workmanship, the finest indeed we know any thing of, an amiable, beautiful young woman;* but I have no common friend to procure me that permission, without which I would not dare to spread the copy.

I am quite aware, Madam, what task the world would assign me in this letter. The obscure bard, when any of the great condescend to take notice of him, should heap the altar with the incense of flattery. Their high ancestry, their own great and godlike qualities and actions, should be recounted with the most exaggerated description. This, Madam, is a task for which I am altogether unfit. Besides a certain disqualifying pride of heart, I know nothing of your connections in life, and have no access to where your real character is to be found—the company of your compeers: and more, I am afraid that even the most refined adulation is by no means the road to your good opinion.

One feature of your character I shall ever with grateful pleasure remember—the reception I got, when I had the honour of waiting on you at Stair. I am little acquainted with politeness; but I know a good deal of benevolence of temper and goodness of heart. Surely, did those in exalted stations know how happy they could make some classes of their inferiors by condescension and affability, they would never stand so high, measuring out with every look the height of their elevation, but condescend as sweetly as did Mrs. Stewart of Stair.*

* Miss A———.

No. XIV.

DR. BLACKLOCK

TO

THE REVEREND MR. G. LOWRIE.

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,

I OUGHT to have acknowledged your favour long ago, not only as a testimony of your kind remembrance, but as it gave me an opportunity of sharing one of the finest, and, perhaps, one of the most genuine entertainments, of which the human mind is susceptible. A number of avocations retarded my progress in reading the poems; at last, however, I have finished that pleasing perusal. Many instances have I seen of Nature's force and beneficence exerted under numerous and formidable disadvantages; but none equal to that with which you have been kind enough to present me. There is a pathos and delicacy in his serious poems, a vein of wit and humour in those of a more festive turn, which cannot be too much admired, nor too warmly approved; and I think I shall never open the book without feeling my astonishment renewed and increased. It was my wish to have expressed my approbation in verse; but whether from declining life, or a temporary depression of spirits, it is at present out of my power to accomplish that agreeable intention.

Mr. Stewart, Professor of Morals in this University, had formerly read me three of the poems, and I had desired him to get my name inserted among the subscribers; but whether this was done, or not, I never could learn. I have little intercourse with Dr. Blair, but will take care to have the poems communicated to him by the intervention of some mutual friend. It has been told me by a gentleman, to whom I showed the performances, and who sought a copy with diligence and ardour, that the whole impression is already exhausted. It were, therefore, much to be wished, for the sake of the young man, that a second edition, more numerous than the former, could immediately be printed; as it appears certain that its intrinsic merit, and the exertion of the author's friends, might give it a more universal circulation than any thing of the kind which has been published within my memory.†

* The song enclosed is that given in the Life of our Poet; beginning,

'Twas e'en—the dewy fields were green, &c.

† The reader will perceive that this is the letter which produced the determination of our Bard to give up his scheme of going to the West Indies, and to try the fate of a new edition of his poems in Edinburgh. A copy of this letter was sent by Mr. Lowrie to Mr. G. Hamilton, and by him communicated to Burns, among whose papers it was found.

No. XV.

FROM SIR JOHN WHITEFORD.

SIR, *Edinburgh, 4th December*, 1786.

I RECEIVED your letter a few days ago. I do not pretend to much interest, but what I have I shall be ready to exert in procuring the attainment of any object you have in view. Your character as a man (forgive my reversing your order), as well as a poet, entitle you, I think, to the assistance of every inhabitant of Ayrshire. I have been told you wished to be made a gauger; I submit it to your consideration, whether it would not be more desirable, if a sum could be raised by subscription, for a second edition of your poems, to lay it out in the stocking of a small farm. I am persuaded it would be a line of life, much more agreeable to your feelings, and in the end more satisfactory. When you have considered this, let me know, and whatever you determine upon, I will endeavour to promote as far as my abilities will permit. With compliments to my friend the doctor, I am,

Your friend and well-wisher,
JOHN WHITEFORD.

P. S.—I shall take it as a favour when you at any time send me a new production.

No. XVI.

FROM THE REV. MR. G. LOWRIE.

DEAR SIR, 22*d December*, 1786.

I LAST week received a letter from Dr. Blacklock, in which he expresses a desire of seeing you. I write this to you, that you may lose no time in waiting upon him, should you not yet have seen him.

. . . . . .

I rejoice to hear, from all corners, of your rising fame, and I wish and expect it may tower still higher by the new publication. But, as a friend, I warn you to prepare to meet with your share of detraction and envy—a train that always accompany great men. For your comfort, I am in great hopes that the number of your friends and admirers will increase, and that you have some chance of ministerial, or even * * * * patronage. Now, my friend, such rapid success is very uncommon: and do you think yourself in no danger of suffering by applause and a full purse? Remember Solomon's advice, which he spoke from experience, "stronger is he that conquers," &c. Keep fast hold of your rural simplicity and purity, like Telemachus, by Mentor's aid, in Calypso's isle, or even in that of Cyprus. I hope *you* have also Minerva with you. I need not tell you how much a modest diffidence and invincible temperance adorn the most shining talents, and elevate the mind, and exalt and refine the imagination even of a poet.

I hope you will not imagine I speak from suspicion or evil report. I assure you I speak from love and good report, and good opinion, and a strong desire to see you shine as much in the sunshine as you have done in the shade, and in the practice as you do in the theory of virtue. This is my prayer, in return for your elegant composition in verse. All here join in compliments, and good wishes for your further prosperity.

No. XVII.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

MAUCHLINE.

Edinburgh, Dec. 7, 1786.

HONOURED SIR,

I HAVE paid every attention to your commands, but can only say what perhaps you will have heard before this reach you, that Muirkirklands were bought by a John Gordon, W. S. but for whom I know not; Mauchlands, Haugh Miln, &c. by a Frederick Fotheringham, supposed to be for Ballochmyle Laird, and Adamhill and Shawood were bought for Oswald's folks.—This is so imperfect an account, and will be so late ere it reach you, that were it not to discharge my conscience I would not trouble you with it; but after all my diligence I could make it no sooner nor better.

For my own affairs, I am in a fair way of becoming as eminent as Thomas a Kempis or John Bunyan; and you may expect henceforth to see my birth-day inserted among the wonderful events, in the poor Robin's and Aberdeen Almanacks, along with the Black Monday, and the battle of Bothwell Bridge.—My lord Glencairn and the Dean of Faculty, Mr. H. Erskine, have taken me under their wing; and by all probability I shall soon be the tenth worthy, and the eighth wise man of the world. Through my lord's influence it is inserted in the records of the Caledonian hunt, that they universally, one and all, subscribe for the second edition.—My subscription bills come out to-morrow, and you shall have some of them next post.—I have met in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, what Solomon emphatically calls, "A friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—The warmth with which he interests himself in my affairs is of the same enthusiastic kind which you, Mr. Aiken, and the few patrons that took notice of my earlier poetic days, shewed for the poor unlucky devil of a poet.

I always remember Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy in my poetic prayers, but *you* both in prose and verse.

May cauld ne'er catch you but * a hap,
Nor hunger but in plenty's lap!
Amen!

No. XVIII.

TO DR. M'KENZIE, Mauchline.

(ENCLOSING HIM THE EXTEMPORE VERSES ON DINING WITH LORD DAER.)

DEAR SIR, *Wednesday Morning.*

I NEVER spent an afternoon among great folks with half that pleasure as when, in company with you, I had the honour of paying my devoirs to that plain, honest, worthy man, the professor.† I would be delighted to see him perform acts of kindness and friendship, though I were not the object; he does it with such a grace. I think his character, divided into ten parts, stands thus—four parts Socrates—four parts Nathaniel—and two parts Shakespeare's Brutus.

The foregoing verses were really extempore, but a little corrected since. They may entertain you a little with the help of that partiality with which you are so good as favour the performances of

Dear Sir,
Your very humble Servant.

No. XIX.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq. Banker, Ayr.

Edinburgh, 13th Dec. 1786.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I WOULD not write you till I could have it in my power to give you some account of myself and my matters, which by the bye is often no easy task.—I arrived here on Tuesday was se'nnight, and have suffered ever since I came to town with a miserable head-ache and stomach complaint, but am now a good deal better.—I have found a worthy warm friend in Mr. Dalrymple, of Orangefield, who introduced me to Lord Glencairn, a man whose worth and brotherly kindness to me, I shall remember when time shall be no more.—By his interest it is passed in the Caledonian hunt, and entered in their books, that they are to take each a copy of the second edition, for which they are to pay one guinea.—I have been introduced to a good many of the *Noblesse*, but my avowed patrons and patronesses are, the Duchess of Gordon—The Countess of Glencairn, with my Lord, and Lady Betty*—The Dean of Faculty—Sir John Whitefoord.—I have likewise warm friends among the literati; Professors Stewart, Blair, and Mr. M'Kenzie—the Man of Feeling.—An unknown hand left ten guineas for the Ayrshire bard with Mr. Sibbald, which I got.—I since have discovered my generous unknown friend to be Patrick Miller, Esq. brother to the Justice Clerk; and drank a glass of claret with him by invitation at his own house yesternight. I am nearly agreed with Creech to print my book, and I suppose I will begin on Monday. I will send a subscription bill or two, next post; when I intend writing my first kind patron, Mr. Aiken. I saw his son to-day and he is very well.

Dugald Stewart, and some of my learned friends, put me in the periodical paper called the Lounger,† a copy of which I here enclose you—I was, Sir, when I was first honoured with your notice, too obscure; now I tremble lest I should be ruined by being dragged too suddenly into the glare of polite and learned observation.

I shall certainly, my ever honoured patron, write you an account of my every step; and better health and more spirits may enable me to make it something better than this stupid matter of fact epistle.

I have the honour to be,
Good Sir,
Your ever grateful humble Servant.

If any of my friends write me, my direction is, care of Mr. Creech, bookseller.

No. XX.‡

TO MR. WILLIAM CHALMERS, Writer, Ayr.

Edinburgh, Dec. 27, 1786.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I CONFESS I have sinned the sin for which there is hardly any forgiveness—ingratitude to friendship—in not writing you sooner; but of all men living, I had intended to send you an entertaining letter; and by all the plodding, stupid powers, that in nodding, conceited majesty, preside over the dull routine of business—A heavily-solemn oath this!—I am, and have been, ever since I came to Edinburgh, as unfit to write a letter of humour, as to write a commentary on the Revelation of St. John the Divine, who was banished to the Isle of Patmos, by the cruel and bloody Domitian, son to Vespasian and brother to Titus, both emperors of Rome, and who was himself an emperor, and

* "But" is frequently used for "without;" i. e. *without clothing.*
† Professor Dugald Stewart.

* Lady Betty Cunningham.
† The paper here alluded to, was written by Mr. M'Kenzie, the celebrated author of the Man of Feeling.
‡ This letter is now presented entire.

raised the second or third persecution, I forget which, against the Christians, and after throwing the said Apostle John, brother to the Apostle James, commonly called James the greater, to distinguish him from another James, who was, on some account or other, known by the name of James the less, after throwing him into a caldron of boiling oil, from which he was miraculously preserved, he banished the poor son of Zebedee, to a desert island in the Archipelago, where he was gifted with the second sight, and saw as many wild beasts as I have seen since I came to Edinburgh; which, a circumstance not very uncommon in story-telling, brings me back to where I set out.

To make you some amends for what, before you reach this paragraph, you will have suffered; I enclose you two poems I have carded and spun since I past Glenbuck.

One blank in the address to Edinburgh—"Fair B——," is heavenly Miss Burnet, daughter to Lord Monboddo, at whose house I have had the honour to be more than once.

There has not been any thing nearly like her, in all the combinations of beauty, grace, and goodness, the Great Creator has formed, since Milton's Eve on the first day of her existence.

My direction is—care of Andrew Bruce, merchant, Bridge-Street.

LETTERS, 1787.

No. XXI.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq.

Edinburgh, Jan. 14, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

It gives me a secret comfort to observe in myself that I am not yet so far gone as Willie Gaw's skate, "past redemption;"* for I have still this favourable symptom of grace, that when my conscience, as in the case of this letter, tells me I am leaving something undone that I ought to do, it teazes me eternally till I do it.

I am still "dark as was chaos" in respect to futurity. My generous friend, Mr. Patrick Miller, has been talking with me about a lease of some farm or other in an estate called Dalswinton, which he has lately bought near Dumfries. Some life-rented embittering recollections whisper me that I will be happier any where than in my old neighbourhood, but Mr. Miller is no judge of land; and though I dare say he means to favour me, yet he may give me, in his opinion, an advantageous bargain, that may ruin me. I am to take a tour by Dumfries as I return, and have promised to meet Mr. Miller on his lands some time in May.

* This is one of a great number of old *saws* that Burns, when a lad, had picked up from his mother, of which the good old woman had a vast collection.

I went to a Mason-lodge yesternight, where the most Worshipful-Grand Master Charters, and all the Grand-Lodge of Scotland visited.—The meeting was numerous and elegant; all the different Lodges about town were present, in all their pomp. The Grand Master, who presided with great solemnity and honour to himself as a gentleman and Mason, among other general toasts gave "Caledonia, and Caledonia's Bard, Brother B——," which rung through the whole assembly with multiplied honours and repeated acclamations. As I had no idea such a thing would happen, I was downright thunder-struck, and trembling in every nerve made the best return in my power. Just as I had finished, some of the grand officers said, so loud that I could hear, with a most comforting accent, "Very well indeed!" which set me something to rights again.

. . . . . .

I have to-day corrected my 152d page. My best good wishes to Mr. Aiken.

I am ever,
Dear Sir,
Your much indebted humble Servant.

No. XXII.

TO THE EARL OF EGLINTON.

MY LORD, *Edinburgh, Jan.* 1787.

As I have but slender pretensions to philosophy, I cannot rise to the exalted ideas of a citizen of the world; but have all those national prejudices which, I believe, glow peculiarly strong in the breast of a Scotchman. There is scarcely any thing to which I am so feelingly alive, as the honour and welfare of my country; and, as a poet, I have no higher enjoyment than singing her sons and daughters. Fate had cast my station in the veriest shades of life; but never did a heart pant more ardently than mine, to be distinguished; though, till very lately, I looked in vain on every side for a ray of light. It is easy, then, to guess how much I was gratified with the countenance and approbation of one of my country's most illustrious sons, when Mr. Wauchope called on me yesterday, on the part of your lordship. Your munificence, my lord, certainly deserves my very grateful acknowledgments; but your patronage is a bounty peculiarly suited to my feelings. I am not master enough of the etiquette of life to know whether there be not some impropriety in troubling your lordship with my thanks; but my heart whispered me to do it. From the emotions of my inmost soul I do it. Selfish in gratitude, I hope, I am incapable of; and mercenary servility, I trust, I shall ever have so much honest pride as to detest.

No. XXIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MADAM, *Edinburgh, 15th Jan.* 1787.

YOURS of the 9th current, which I am this moment honoured with, is a deep reproach to me for ungrateful neglect. I will tell you the real truth, for I am miserably awkward at a fib: I wished to have written to Dr. Moore before I wrote to you; but though, every day since I received yours of December 30th, the idea, the wish to write him, has constantly pressed on my thoughts, yet I could not for my soul set about it. I know his fame and character, and I am one of "the sons of little men." To write him a mere matter-of-fact affair, like a merchant's order, would be disgracing the little character I have; and to write the author of *The View of Society and Manners* a letter of sentiment—I declare every artery runs cold at the thought. I shall try, however, to write him to-morrow or next day. His kind interposition in my behalf I have already experienced, as a gentleman waited on me the other day, on the part of Lord Eglinton, with ten guineas by way of subscription for two copies of my next edition.

The word you object to in the mention I have made of my glorious countryman and your immortal ancestor, is indeed borrowed from Thomson; but it does not strike me as an improper epithet. I distrusted my own judgment on your finding fault with it, and applied for the opinion of some of the literati here, who honour me with their critical strictures, and they all allow it to be proper. The song you ask I cannot recollect, and I have not a copy of it. I have not composed any thing on the great Wallace, except what you have seen in print, and the enclosed, which I will print in this edition.* You will see I have mentioned some others of the name. When I composed my *Vision*, long ago, I had attempted a description of Kyle, of which the additional stanzas are a part, as it originally stood. My heart glows with a wish to be able to do justice to the merits of the *Saviour of his Country*, which, sooner or later, I shall at least attempt.

You are afraid I shall grow intoxicated with my prosperity as a poet. Alas! Madam, I know myself and the world too well. I do not mean any airs of affected modesty; I am willing to believe that my abilities deserved some notice; but in a most enlightened, informed age and nation, when poetry is and has been the study of men of the first natural genius, aided with all the powers of polite learning, polite books, and polite company—to be dragged forth to the full glare of learned and polite observation, with all my imperfections of awkward rusticity and crude unpolished ideas on my head—I assure you, Madam, I do not dissemble when I tell you I tremble for the consequences. The novelty of a poet in my obscure situation, without any of those advantages which are reckoned necessary for that character, at least at this time of day, has raised a partial tide of public notice, which has borne me to a height where I am absolutely, feelingly certain, my abilities are inadequate to support me; and too surely do I see that time when the same tide will leave me, and recede, perhaps, as far below the mark of truth.

. . . . . .

Your patronizing me, and interesting yourself in my fame and character as a poet, I rejoice in; it exalts me in my own idea; and whether you can or cannot aid me in my subscription is a trifle. Has a paltry subscription-bill any charms to the heart of a bard, compared with the patronage of the descendant of the immortal Wallace?

* Stanzas in the *Vision*, beginning third stanza, "By stately tower or palace fair," and ending with the first duan.

No. XXIV.

TO DR. MOORE.

SIR, 1787.

MRS. DUNLOP has been so kind as to send me extracts of letters she has had from you, where you do the rustic bard the honour of noticing him and his works. Those who have felt the anxieties and solicitudes of authorship, can only know what pleasure it gives to be noticed in such a manner by judges of the first character. Your criticisms, Sir, I receive with reverence; only, I am sorry they mostly came too late; a peccant passage or two, that I would certainly have altered, were gone to the press.

The hope to be admired for ages is, in by far the greater part of those even who are authors of repute, an unsubstantial dream. For my part, my first ambition was, and still my strongest wish is, to please my compeers, the rustic inmates of the hamlet, while ever changing language and manners shall allow me to be relished and understood. I am very willing to admit that I have some poetical abilities; and as few, if any writers, either moral or poetical, are intimately acquainted with the classes of mankind among whom I have chiefly mingled, I may have seen men and manners in a different phasis from what is common, which may assist originality of thought. Still I know very well the novelty of my character has by far the greatest share in the learned and polite notice I have lately had; and in a language where Pope and Churchill have raised the laugh, and Shenstone and Gray drawn the tear—where Thomson and Beattie have painted the landscape, and Lyttleton and Collins described the heart, I am not vain enough to hope for distinguished poetic fame.

No. XXV.

FROM DR. MOORE.

SIR, *Clifford Street, Jan.* 23, 1787.

I HAVE just received your letter, by which I find I have reason to complain of my friend Mrs. Dunlop for transmitting to you extracts from my letters to her, by much too freely and too carelessly written for your perusal. I must forgive her, however, in consideration of her good intention, 'as you will forgive me, I hope, for the freedom I use with certain expressions, in consideration of my admiration of the poems in general. If I may judge of the author's disposition from his works, with all the other good qualities of a poet, he has not the *irritable* temper ascribed to that race of men by one of their own number, whom you have the happiness to resemble in ease and *curious felicity* of expression. Indeed the poetical beauties, however original and brilliant, and lavishly scattered, are not all I admire in your works; the love of your native country, that feeling sensibility to all the objects of humanity, and the independent spirit which breathes through the whole, give me a most favourable impression of the poet, and have made me often regret that I did not see the poems, the certain effect of which would have been my seeing the author last summer, when I was longer in Scotland than I have been for many years.

I rejoice very sincerely at the encouragement you receive at Edinburgh, and I think you peculiarly fortunate in the patronage of Dr. Blair, who, I am informed, interests himself very much for you. I beg to be remembered to him: nobody can have a warmer regard for that gentleman than I have, which, independent of the worth of his character, would be kept alive by the memory of our common friend, the late Mr. George B———e.

Before I received your letter, I sent enclosed in a letter to ————, a sonnet by Miss Williams, a young poetical lady, which she wrote on reading your Mountain-Daisy; perhaps it may not displease you. *

I have been trying to add to the number of your subscribers, but I find many of my acquaintance are already among them. I have only to add, that with every sentiment of esteem, and most cordial good wishes,

I am,

Your obedient humble servant,

J. MOORE.

* The sonnet is as follows:—

WHILE soon the garden's flaunting flowers decay,
And scattered on the earth neglected lie,
The "Mountain-Daisy," cherished by the ray
A poet drew from heaven, shall never die.
Ah, like that lonely flower the poet rose!
'Mid penury's bare soil and bitter gale;
He felt each storm that on the mountain blows,
Nor ever knew the shelter of the vale.
By genius in her native vigour nurst,
On nature with impassion'd look he gazed;
Then through the cloud of adverse fortune burst
Indignant, and in light unburrow'd blazed.
Scotia! from rude affliction shield thy bard,
His heaven-taught numbers Fame herself will guard.

No. XXVI.

TO DR. MOORE.

SIR, *Edinburgh, 15th Feb.* 1787.

PARDON my seeming neglect in delaying so long to acknowledge the honour you have done me, in your kind notice of me, January 23d. Not many months ago, I knew no other employment than following the plough, nor could boast any thing higher than a distant acquaintance with a country clergyman. Mere greatness never embarrasses me: I have nothing to ask from the great, and I do not fear their judgment; but genius, polished by learning, and at its proper point of elevation in the eye of the world, this of late I frequently meet with, and tremble at its approach. I scorn the affectation of seeming modesty to cover self-conceit. That I have some merit I do not deny; but I see, with frequent wringings of heart, that the novelty of my character, and the honest national prejudice of my countrymen, have borne me to a height altogether untenable to my abilities.

For the honour Miss W. has done me, please, Sir, return her in my name, my most grateful thanks. I have more than once thought of paying her in kind, but have hitherto quitted the idea in hopeless despondency. I had never before heard of her; but the other day I got her poems, which, for several reasons, some belonging to the head, and others the offspring of the heart, give me a great deal of pleasure. I have little pretensions to critic lore: there are, I think, two characteristic features in her poetry —the unfettered wild flight of native genius, and the querulous, *sombre* tenderness of "time-settled sorrow."

I only know what pleases me, often without being able to tell why.

No. XXVII.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, ESQ. AYR.

Edinburgh, Feb. 24, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

I WILL soon be with you now *in guid black prent;* in a week or ten days at farthest—I am obliged, against my own wish, to print sub-

scribers' names, so if any of my Ayr friends have subscription bills, they must be sent in to Creech directly.—I am getting my phiz done by an eminent engraver; and if it can be ready in time, I will appear in my book looking like other *fools*, to my title page.*

I have the honour to be,
Ever your grateful, &c.

No. XXVIII.

FROM DR. MOORE.

Clifford Street, 28th Feb. 1787.

DEAR SIR,

YOUR letter of the 15th gave me a great deal of pleasure. It is not surprising that you improve in correctness and taste, considering where you have been for some time past. And I dare swear there is no danger of your admitting any polish which might weaken the vigour of your native powers.

I am glad to perceive that you disdain the nauseous affectation of decrying your own merit as a poet—an affectation which is displayed with most ostentation by those who have the greatest share of self-conceit, and which only adds undeceiving falsehood to disgusting vanity. For you to deny the merit of your poems would be arraigning the fixed opinion of the public.

As the new edition of my *View of Society* is not yet ready, I have sent you the former edition, which, I beg you will accept as a small mark of my esteem. It is sent by sea, to the care of Mr. Creech; and, along with these four volumes for yourself, I have also sent my *Medical Sketches*, in one volume, for my friend Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop: this you will be so obliging as to transmit, or if you chance to pass soon by Dunlop, to give to her.

I am happy to hear that your subscription is so ample, and shall rejoice at every piece of good fortune that befalls you: for you are a very great favourite in my family; and this is a higher compliment than perhaps you are aware of. It includes almost all the professions, and of course is a proof that your writings are adapted to various tastes and situations. My youngest son who is at Winchester school, writes to me that he is translating some stanzas of your *Hallowe'en* into Latin verse, for the benefit of his comrades. This union of taste partly proceeds, no doubt, from the cement of Scottish partiality, with which they are all somewhat tinctured. Even *your translator*, who left Scotland too early in life for recollection, is not without it.

. . . . . .

I remain, with greatest sincerity,
Your obedient servant,
J. MOORE.

No. XXIX.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

MY LORD, *Edinburgh*, 1787.

I WANTED to purchase a profile of your lordship, which I was told was to be got in town; but I am truly sorry to see that a blundering painter has spoiled a "human face divine." The enclosed stanzas I intended to have written below a picture or profile of your lordship, could I have been so happy as to procure one with any thing of a likeness.

As I will soon return to my shades, I wanted to have something like a material object for my gratitude; I wanted to have it in my power to say to a friend, There is my noble patron, my generous benefactor. Allow me, my lord, to publish these verses. I conjure your lordship by the honest throe of gratitude, by the generous wish of benevolence, by all the powers and feelings which compose the magnanimous mind, do not deny me this petition.* I owe to your lordship; and what has not in some other instances always been the case with me, the weight of the obligation is a pleasing load. I trust, have a heart as independent as your lordship's, than which I can say nothing more: and would not be beholden to favours that would crucify my feelings. Your dignified character in life, and manner of supporting that character are flattering to my pride; and I would be jealous of the purity of my grateful attachment, where I was under the patronage of one of the much favoured sons of fortune.

Almost every poet has celebrated his patrons, particularly when they were names dear to fame, and illustrious in their country; allow me, then, my lord, if you think the verses have intrinsic merit, to tell the world how much I have the honour to be

Your lordship's highly indebted,
And ever grateful humble servant

---

* This portrait is engraved by Mr. Beugo, an artist who well merits the epithet bestowed on him by the poet, after a picture of Mr. Nasmyth, which he painted *con amore*, and liberally presented to Burns. This picture is of the cabinet size.

* It does not appear that the Earl granted this request, nor have the verses alluded to been found among the MSS.

No. XXX.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

MY LORD,

THE honour your lordship has done me, by your notice and advice in yours of the 1st instant, I shall ever gratefully remember:

"Praise from thy lips 'tis mine with joy to boast,
They best can give it who deserve it most."

Your lordship touches the darling chord of my heart, when you advise me to fire my muse at Scottish story and Scottish scenes. I wish for nothing more than to make a leisurely pilgrimage through my native country; to sit and muse on those once hard-contended fields, where Caledonia, rejoicing, saw her bloody lion borne through broken ranks to victory and fame; and, catching the inspiration, to pour the deathless names in song. But, my lord, in the midst of these enthusiastic reveries, a long-visaged, dry, moral-looking phantom strides across my imagination, and pronounces these emphatic words, "I, Wisdom, dwell with prudence."

. . . . . .

This, my lord, is unanswerable. I must return to my humble station, and woo my rustic muse in my wonted way at the plough-tail. Still, my lord, while the drops of life warm my heart, gratitude to that dear-loved country in which I boast my birth, and gratitude to those her distinguished sons, who have honoured me so much with their patronage and approbation, shall, while stealing through my humble shades, ever distend my bosom, and at times draw forth the swelling tear.

No. XXXI.

Ext. Property in favour of MR. ROBERT BURNS, *to erect and keep up a Headstone in memory of Poet* FERGUSSON, 1787.

Session-house, within the Kirk of Canongate, the twenty-second day of February, one thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven years.

Sederunt of the managers of the Kirk and Kirk-yard Funds of Canongate.

WHICH day, the treasurer to the said funds produced a letter from Mr. Robert Burns, of date the sixth current, which was read, and appointed to be engrossed in their sederunt-book, and of which letter the tenor follows: "To the Honourable Bailies of Canongate, Edinburgh. Gentlemen, I am sorry to be told that the remains of Robert Fergusson, the so justly celebrated poet, a man whose talents, for ages to come, will do honour to our Caledonian name, lie in your church-yard, among the ignoble dead, unnoticed and unknown.

"Some memorial to direct the steps of the lovers of Scottish song, when they wish to shed a tear over the "narrow house," of the bard who is no more, is surely a tribute due to Fergusson's memory; a tribute I wish to have the honour of paying.

"I petition you, then, Gentlemen, to permit me to lay a simple stone over his revered ashes, to remain an unalienable property to his deathless fame. I have the honour to be, Gentlemen, your very humble servant, (*sic subscribitur*),

"ROBERT BURNS."

Thereafter the said managers, in consideration of the laudable and disinterested motion of Mr. Burns, and the propriety of his request, did, and hereby do, unanimously grant power and liberty to the said Robert Burns to erect a headstone at the grave of the said Robert Fergusson, and to keep up and preserve the same to his memory in all time coming. Extracted forth of the records of the managers, by

WILLIAM SPROTT, *Clerk.*

No. XXXII.

TO ———

MY DEAR SIR,

YOU may think, and too justly, that I am a selfish ungrateful fellow, having received so many repeated instances of kindness from you, and yet never putting pen to paper to say—thank you; but if you knew what a devil of a life my conscience has led me on that account, your good heart would think yourself too much avenged. By the bye, there is nothing in the whole frame of man which seems to me so unaccountable as that thing called conscience. Had the troublesome yelping cur powers efficient to prevent a mischief, he might be of use: but at the beginning of the business, his feeble efforts are to the workings of passion as the infant frosts of an autumnal morning to the unclouded fervour of the rising sun: and no sooner are the tumultuous doings of the wicked deed over, than, amidst the bitter native consequences of folly, in the very vortex of our horrors, up starts conscience, and harrows us with the feelings of the d———.

I have enclosed you, by way of expiation, some verse and prose, that, if they merit a place in your truly entertaining miscellany, you are welcome to. The prose extract is literally as Mr. Sprott sent it me.

The Inscription on the Stone is as follows:

HERE LIES ROBERT FERGUSSON,

POET.

Born September 5th, 1751—*Died*, 16*th October* 1774.

No sculptured marble here, nor pompous lay,
"No storied urn nor animated bust;"
This simple stone directs pale Scotia's way
To pour her sorrows o'er her poet's dust.

On the other side of the Stone is as follows:

"By special grant of the Managers to Robert Burns, who erected this stone, this burial-place is to remain for ever sacred to the memory of Robert Fergusson."

No. XXXIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER FROM ———

8th March, 1787.

I AM truly happy to know you have found a friend in ———; his patronage of you does him great honour. He is truly a good man; by far the best I ever knew, or, perhaps, ever shall know, in this world. But I must not speak all I think of him, lest I should be thought partial.

So you have obtained liberty from the magistrates to erect a stone over Fergusson's grave? I do not doubt it; such things have been, as Shakespeare says, "in the olden time:"

"The poet's fate, is here in emblem shown,
He ask'd for bread, and he received a stone."

It is, I believe, upon poor Butler's tomb that this is written. But how many brothers of Parnassus, as well as poor Butler and poor Fergusson, have asked for bread, and been served with the same sauce!

The magistrates *gave you liberty*, did they? O generous magistrates! . . . . celebrated over the three kingdoms for his public spirit, gives a poor poet liberty to raise a tomb to a poor poet's memory!—most generous! . . . once upon a time gave that same poet the mighty sum of eighteen pence for a copy of his works. But then it must be considered that the poet was at this time absolutely starving, and besought his aid with all the earnestness of hunger; and, over and above, he received a ——— worth, at least one-third of the value, in exchange, but which, I believe the poet afterwards very ungratefully expunged.

Next week I hope to have the pleasure of seeing you in Edinburgh; and as my stay will be for eight or ten days, I wish you or ——— would take a snug, well-aired bed-room for me, where I may have the pleasure of seeing you over a morning cup of tea. But by all accounts, it will be a matter of some difficulty to see you at all, unless your company is bespoke a week before-hand. There is a great rumour here concerning your great intimacy with the Duchess of ———, and other ladies of distinction. I am really told that "cards to invite fly by thousands each night;" and, if you had one, I suppose there would also be "bribes to your old secretary." It seems you are resolved to make hay while the sun shines, and avoid, if possible, the fate of poor Fergusson, ... *Quærenda pecunia primum est, virtus post nummos*, is a good maxim to thrive by: you seemed to despise it while in this country; but probably some philosopher in Edinburgh has taught you better sense.

Pray, are you yet engraving as well as printing?—Are you yet seized

"With itch of picture in the front,
With bays of wicked rhyme upon't!"

But I must give up this trifling, and attend to matters that more concern myself: so, as the Aberdeen wit says, *adieu dryly, we sal drink phan we meet.**

No. XXXIV.

TO MR. JAMES CANDLISH,

STUDENT IN PHYSIC, COLLEGE, GLASGOW.

Edinburgh, March 21, 1787.

MY EVER DEAR OLD ACQUAINTANCE,

I WAS equally surprised and pleased at your letter; though I dare say you will think by my delaying so long to write to you, that I am so drowned in the intoxication of good fortune as to be indifferent to old and once dear connections. The truth is, I was determined to write a good letter, full of argument, amplification, erudition, and, as Bayes says, *all that*. I thought of it, and thought of it, but for my soul I cannot: and lest you should mistake the cause of my silence, I just sit down to tell you so. Don't give yourself credit though, that the strength of your logic scares me: the truth is, I never mean to meet you on that ground at all. You have

* The above extract is from a letter of one of the ablest of our poet's correspondents, which contains some interesting anecdotes of Fergusson, that we should have been happy to have inserted, if they could have been authenticated. The writer is mistaken in supposing the magistrates of Edinburgh had any share in the transaction respecting the monument erected for Fergusson by our bard: this, it is evident, passed between Burns and the Kirk Session of the Canongate. Neither at Edinburgh, nor anywhere else, do magistrates usually trouble themselves to inquire how the house of a poor poet is furnished, or how his grave is adorned.

shewn me one thing, which was to be demonstrated; that strong pride of reasoning, with a little affectation of singularity, may mislead the best of hearts. I, likewise, since you and I were first acquainted, in the pride of despising old women's stories, ventured in "the daring path Spinosa trod;" but experience of the weakness, not the strength, of human powers, made me glad to grasp at revealed religion.

I must stop, but don't impute my brevity to a wrong cause. I am still, in the Apostle Paul's phrase, "The old man with his deeds" as when we were sporting about the lady thorn. I shall be four weeks here yet, at least; and so I shall expect to hear from you—welcome sense, welcome nonsense.

I am, with the warmest sincerity,
My dear old friend,
Yours.

No. XXXV.

TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

If once I were gone from this scene of hurry and dissipation, I promise myself the pleasure of that correspondence being renewed which has been so long broken. At present I have time for nothing. Dissipation and business engross every moment. I am engaged in assisting an honest Scots enthusiast,* a friend of mine, who is an engraver, and has taken it into his head to publish a collection of all our songs set to music, of which the words and music are done by Scotsmen. This, you will easily guess, is an undertaking exactly to my taste. I have collected, begged, borrowed, and stolen all the songs I could meet with. Pompey's Ghost, words and music, I beg from you immediately, to go into his second number: the first is already published. I shall shew you the first number when I see you in Glasgow, which will be in a fortnight or less. Do be so kind as send me the song in a day or two: you cannot imagine how much it will oblige me.

Direct to me at Mr. W. Cruikshank's, St. James's Square, New Town, Edinburgh.

No. XXXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MADAM, *Edinburgh, March* 22, 1787.

I read your letter with watery eyes. A little, very little while ago, *I had scarce a friend but the stubborn pride of my own bosom;* now I am distinguished, patronized, befriended by you. Your friendly advices, I will not give them the cold name of criticisms, I receive with reverence. I have made some small alterations in what I before had printed I have the advice of some very judicious friends among the literati here, but with them I sometimes find it necessary to claim the privilege of thinking for myself. The noble Earl of Glencairn, to whom I owe more than to any man, does me the honour of giving me his strictures: his hints with respect to impropriety or indelicacy, I follow implicitly.

You kindly interest yourself in my future views and prospects; there I can give you no light; it is all

> "Dark as was chaos, ere the infant sun
> Was roll'd together, or had tried his beams
> Athwart the gloom profound."

The appellation of a Scottish bard is by far my highest pride; to continue to deserve it is my most exalted ambition. Scottish scenes and Scottish story are the themes I could wish to sing. I have no dearer aim than to have it in my power, unplagued with the routine of business, for which heaven knows I am unfit enough, to make leisurely pilgrimages through Caledonia; to sit on the fields of her battles; to wander on the romantic banks of her rivers; and to muse by the stately towers or venerable ruins, once the honoured abodes of her heroes.

But these are all Utopian thoughts: I have dallied long enough with life: 'tis time to be in earnest. I have a fond, an aged mother to care for; and some other bosom ties perhaps equally tender. Where the individual only suffers by the consequences of his own thoughtlessness, indolence, or folly, he may be excusable: nay, shining abilities, and some of the nobler virtues, may half-sanctify a heedless character: but where God and nature have intrusted the welfare of others to his care; where the trust is sacred, and the ties are dear, that man must be far gone in selfishness, or strangely lost to reflection, whom these connections will not rouse to exertion.

I guess that I shall clear between two and three hundred pounds by my authorship; with that sum I intend, so far as I may be said to have any intention, to return to my old acquaintance, the plough, and, if I can meet with a lease by which I can live, to commence farmer. I do not intend to give up poetry: being bred to labour secures me independence; and the muses are my chief, sometimes have been my only enjoyment. If my practice second my resolution, I shall have principally at heart the serious business of life: but while following my plough, or building up my shocks, I shall cast a leisure glance to that dear, that only feature of my character, which gave me the notice of my country and the patronage of a Wallace.

Thus, honoured madam, I have given you the bard, his situation, and his views, native as they are in his own bosom.

. . . . . .

* *Johnson*, the publisher of the Scots Musical Museum.

No. XXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

MADAM, *Edinburgh, 15th April,* 1787.

THERE is an affectation of gratitude which I dislike. The periods of Johnson and the pauses of Sterne may hide a selfish heart. For my part, Madam, I trust I have too much pride for servility, and too little prudence for selfishness. I have this moment broke open your letter, but

> " Rude am I in speech,
> And therefore little can I grace my cause
> In speaking for myself—"

so I shall not trouble you with any fine speeches and hunted figures. I shall just lay my hand on my heart, and say, I hope I shall ever have the truest, the warmest, sense of your goodness.

I come abroad in print for certain on Wednesday. Your orders I shall punctually attend to; only, by the way, I must tell you that I was paid before for Dr. Moore's and Miss W.'s copies, through the medium of Commissioner Cochrane in this place; but that we can settle when I have the honour of waiting on you.

Dr. Smith* was just gone to London the morning before I received your letter to him.

No. XXXVIII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Edinburgh, 23d April, 1787.

I RECEIVED the books, and sent the one you mentioned to Mrs. Dunlop. I am ill-skilled in beating the coverts of imagination for metaphors of gratitude. I thank you, Sir, for the honour you have done me; and to my latest hour will warmly remember it. To be highly pleased with your book, is what I have in common with the world; but to regard these volumes as a mark of the author's friendly esteem, is a still more supreme gratification.

I leave Edinburgh in the course of ten days or a fortnight; and after a few pilgrimages over some of the classic ground of Caledonia, *Cowden-Knowes, Banks of Yarrow, Tweed, &c.* I shall return to my rural shades, in all likelihood never more to quit them. I have formed many intimacies and friendships here, but I am afraid they are all of too tender a construction to bear carriage a hundred and fifty miles. To the rich, the great, the fashionable, the polite, I have no equivalent to offer; and I am afraid my meteor appearance will by no means entitle me to a settled correspondence with any of you, who are the permanent lights of genius and literature.

My most respectful compliments to Miss W. If once this tangent flight of mine were over, and I were returned to my wonted leisurely motion in my old circle, I may probably endeavour to return her poetic compliment in kind.

No. XXXIX.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO MRS DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, 30th April, 1787.

——— YOUR criticisms, Madam, I understand very well, and could have wished to have pleased you better. You are right in your guess that I am not very amenable to counsel. Poets, much my superiors, have so flattered those who possessed the adventitious qualities of wealth and power, that I am determined to flatter no created being either in prose or verse.

I set as little by ———, lords, clergy, critics, &c. as all these respective gentry do by my bardship. I know what I may expect from the world by and by—illiberal abuse, and perhaps contemptuous neglect.

I am happy, Madam, that some of my own favourite pieces are distinguished by your particular approbation. For my Dream, which has unfortunately incurred your loyal displeasure, I hope in four weeks, or less, to have the honour of appearing at Dunlop in its defence, in person.

No. XL.

TO THE REVEREND DR. HUGH BLAIR.

Lawn-Market, Edinburgh, 3d May, 1787.

REVEREND AND MUCH RESPECTED SIR,

I LEAVE Edinburgh to-morrow morning, but could not go without troubling you with half a line, sincerely to thank you for the kindness, patronage, and friendship you have shown me. I often felt the embarrassment of my singular situation; drawn forth from the veriest shades of life to the glare of remark; and honoured by the notice of those illustrious names of my country, whose works, while they are applauded to the end of time, will ever instruct and mend the heart. However the meteor-like novelty of my appearance in the world might attract notice, and honour me with the acquaintance of the permanent lights of genius and literature, those who are truly benefactors of the immortal nature of man; I knew very well, that my utmost merit was far unequal to the task of preserving that character when once the novelty was over. I have made up my mind, that abuse, or almost

* Adam Smith.

even neglect, will not surprise me in my quarters.

I have sent you a proof impression of Beugo's work for me, done on Indian paper, as a trifling but sincere testimony with what heart-warm gratitude I am, &c.

No. XLI.

FROM DR. BLAIR.

Argyle-Square, Edinburgh, 4th May, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I WAS favoured this forenoon with your very obliging letter, together with an impression of your portrait, for which I return you my best thanks. The success you have met with I do not think was beyond your merits; and if I have had any small hand in contributing to it, it gives me great pleasure. I know no way in which literary persons, who are advanced in years, can do more service to the world, than in forwarding the efforts of rising genius, or bringing forth unknown merit from obscurity. I was the first person who brought out to the notice of the world, the poems of Ossian: first by the *Fragments of Ancient Poetry,* which I published, and afterwards, by my setting on foot the undertaking for collecting and publishing the *Works of Ossian;* and I have always considered this as a meritorious action of my life.

Your situation, as you say, was indeed very singular; and, in being brought out all at once from the shades of deepest privacy, to so great a share of public notice and observation, you had to stand a severe trial. I am happy that you have stood it so well; and as far as I have known or heard, though in the midst of many temptations, without reproach to your character and behaviour.

You are now, I presume, to retire to a more private walk of life; and I trust, will conduct yourself there with industry, prudence, and honour. You have laid the foundation for just public esteem. In the midst of those employments, which your situation will render proper, you will not, I hope, neglect to promote that esteem, by cultivating your genius, and attending to such productions of it as may raise your character still higher. At the same time, be not in too great a haste to come forward. Take time and leisure to improve and mature your talents; for on any second production you give the world, your fate, as a poet, will very much depend. There is, no doubt, a gloss of novelty which time wears off. As you very properly hint yourself, you are not to be surprised if, in your rural retreat, you do not find yourself surrounded with that glare of notice and applause which here shone upon you. No man can be a good poet without being somewhat of a philosopher. He must lay his account, that any one, who exposes himself to public observation, will occasionally meet with the attacks of illiberal censure, which it is always best to overlook and despise. He will be inclined sometimes to court retreat, and to disappear from public view. He will not affect to shine always, that he may at proper seasons come forth with more advantage and energy. He will not think himself neglected if he be not always praised. I have taken the liberty, you see, of an old man, to give advice and make reflections which your own good sense will, I dare say, render unnecessary.

As you mention your being just about to leave town, you are going, I should suppose, to Dumfriesshire, to look at some of Mr. Miller's farms. I heartily wish the offers to be made you there may answer; as I am persuaded you will not easily find a more generous and better hearted proprietor to live under than Mr. Miller. When you return, if you come this way, I will be happy to see you, and to know concerning your future plans of life. You will find me, by the 22d of this month, not in my house in Argyle Square, but at a country-house at Restalrig, about a mile east from Edinburgh, near the Musselburgh road. Wishing you all success and prosperity, I am, with real regard and esteem,

Dear Sir,
Yours sincerely,
HUGH BLAIR.

No. XLII.

TO WILLIAM CREECH, Esq.

(*of Edinburgh,*) LONDON.

Selkirk, 13th May, 1787.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,

THE enclosed * I have just wrote, nearly extempore, in a solitary inn in Selkirk, after a miserable wet day's riding.—I have been over most of East Lothian, Berwick, Roxburgh, and Selkirkshires; and next week I begin a tour through the north of England. Yesterday I dined with Lady Hariot, sister to my noble patron, *Quem Deus conservet!* I would write till I would tire you as much with dull prose as I dare say by this time you are with wretched verse, but I am jaded to death; so, with a grateful farewell,

I have the honour to be,
Good Sir, yours sincerely.

* Elegy on W. Creech; see the Poetry.

No. XLIII.

FROM DR. MOORE.

Glifford Street, May 23, 1787.

DEAR SIR,

I HAD the pleasure of your letter by Mr. Creech, and soon after he sent me the new edition of your poems. You seem to think it incumbent on you to send to each subscriber a number of copies proportionate to his subscription money; but you may depend upon it, few subscribers expect more than one copy, whatever they subscribed. I must inform you, however, that I took twelve copies for those subscribers for whose money you were so accurate as to send me a receipt; and Lord Eglinton told me he had sent for six copies for himself, as he wished to give five of them in presents.

Some of the poems you have added in this last edition are beautiful, particularly the *Winter Night*, the *Address to Edinburgh*, *Green grow the Rashes*, and the two songs immediately following; the latter of which was exquisite. By the way, I imagine you have a peculiar talent for such compositions, which you ought to indulge.* No kind of poetry demands more delicacy or higher polishing. Horace is more admired on account of his *Odes* than all his other writings. But nothing now added is equal to your *Vision* and *Cotter's Saturday Night*. In these are united fine imagery, natural and pathetic description, with sublimity of language and thought. It is evident that you already possess a great variety of expression and command of the English language; you ought, therefore, to deal more sparingly for the future in the provincial dialect:—why should you, by using *that*, limit the number of your admirers to those who understand the Scottish, when you can extend it to all persons of taste who understand the English language? In my opinion, you should plan some larger work than any you have as yet attempted. I mean, reflect upon some proper subject, and arrange the plan in your mind, without beginning to execute any part of it till you have studied most of the best English poets, and read a little more of history. The Greek and Roman stories you can read in some abridgment, and soon become master of the most brilliant facts, which must highly delight a poetical mind. You *should* also, and very soon *may*, become master of the heathen mythology, to which there are everlasting allusions in all the poets, and which in itself is charmingly fanciful. What will require to be studied with more attention, is modern history; that is, the history of France and Great Britain, from the beginning of Henry the Seventh's reign. I know very well you have a mind capable of attaining knowledge by a shorter process than is commonly used, and I am certain you are capable of making a better use of it, when attained, than is generally done.

I beg you will not give yourself the trouble of writing to me when it is *inconvenient*, and make no apology, when you do write, for having postponed it; be assured of this, however, that I shall always be happy to hear from you. I think my friend Mr. —— told me that you had some poems in manuscript by you of a satirical and humorous nature (in which, by the way, I think you very strong), which your prudent friends prevailed on you to omit, particularly one called *Somebody's Confession;* if you will entrust me with a sight of any of these, I will pawn my word to give no copies, and will be obliged to you for a perusal of them.

I understand you intend to take a farm, and make the useful and respectable business of husbandry your chief occupation; this, I hope, will not prevent your making occasional addresses to the nine ladies who have shown you such favour, one of whom visited you in the *auld clay biggin*. Virgil, before you, proved to the world that there is nothing in the business of husbandry inimical to poetry; and I sincerely hope that you may afford an example of a good poet being a successful farmer. I fear it will not be in my power to visit Scotland this season; when I do, I'll endeavour to find you out, for I heartily wish to see and converse with you. If ever your occasions call you to this place, I make no doubt of your paying me a visit, and you may depend on a very cordial welcome from this family. I am, dear Sir,

Your friend and obedient servant,

J. MOORE.

* His subsequent compositions will bear testimony to the accuracy of Dr. Moore's judgment.

No. XLIV.

TO MR. W. NICOLL,

MASTER OF THE HIGH-SCHOOL, EDINBURGH.

Carlisle, June 1, 1787.

KIND, HONEST-HEARTED WILLIE.

I'M sitten down here, after seven and forty miles ridin, e'en as forjesket and forniaw'd as a forfoughten cock, to gie you some notion o' my land lowper-like stravaguin sin the sorrowfu' hour that I sheuk hands and parted wi' *auld Reekie*.

My auld, ga'd gleyde o' a meere has huchy-all'd up hill and down brae, in Scotland and England, as teugh and birnie as a vera devil wi' me.* It's true, she's as poor's a sang-maker

* This mare was the Poet's favourite JENNY GEDDES, of whom *honourable* and most *humorous* mention is made in a letter, inserted in Dr. Currie's edition, vol. i. p. 165.

This old and faithful servant of the Poet's was named by him, after the old woman, who in her zeal against religious innovation, threw a stool at the Dean of Edinburgh's head, when he attempted in 1637, to introduce the Scottish *Liturgy*. "On Sunday, the 23d

and as hard's a kirk, and tipper-taipers when she taks the gate, first like a lady's gentlewoman in a minuwae, or a hen on a het girdle, but she's a yauld, poutherie Girran for a' that, and has a stomack like Willie Stalker's meere that wad hae disgeested tumbler-wheels, for she'll whip me aff her five stimparts o' the best aits at a down-sittin and ne'er fash her thumb. When ance her ringbanes and spavies, her crucks and cramps, are fairly soupl'd, she beets to, beets to, and ay the hindmost hour the tightest. I could wager her price to a thretty pennies that, for twa or three wooks ridin at fifty mile a day, the deil-sticket a five gallopers acqueesh Clyde and Whithorn could cast saut on her tail.

I hae dander'd owre a' the kintra frae Dumbar to Selcraig, and hae forgather'd wi' mony a guid fallow, and monie a weelfar'd hizzie. I met wi' twa dink quines in particlar, ane o' them a sonsie, fine, fodgel lass, baith braw and bonie; the tither was a clean-shankit, straught, tight, weelfar'd winch, as blithe's a lintwhite on a flowerie thorn, and as sweet and modest's a new blawn plumrose in a hazle shaw. They were baith bred to mainers by the beuk, and onie ane o' them had as muckle smeddum and rumblgumtion as the half o' some presbytries that you and I baith ken. They play'd me sik a deevil o' a shavie that I daur say if my harigals were turn'd out, ye wad see twa nicks i' the heart o' me like the mark o' a kail-whittle in a castock.

I was gaun to write you a lang pystle, but, Gude forgie me, I gat mysel sae notouriously bitchify'd the day after kail-time that I can hardly stoiter but and ben.

My best respecks to the guidwife and a' our common friens, especiall Mr. and Mrs. Cruikshank and the honest guidman o' Jock's Lodge.

I'll be in Dumfries the morn gif the beast be to the fore, and the brauks bide hale.

Gude be wi' you, Willie!

Amen!—

No. XLV.

FROM MR. JOHN HUTCHINSON.

Jamaica, St. Ann's, 14th June, 1787.

SIR,

I RECEIVED yours, dated Edinburgh, 2d January, 1787, wherein you acquaint me you were engaged with Mr. Douglas of Port Antonio, for three years, at thirty pounds sterling a-year; and am happy some unexpected accidents intervened that prevented your sailing with the vessel, as I have great reason to think Mr. Douglas's employ would by no means have answered your expectations. I received a copy of your publications, for which I return you my thanks, and it is my own opinion, as well as that of such of my friends as have seen them, they are most excellent in their kind; although some could have wished they had been in the English style, as they allege the Scottish dialect is now becoming obsolete, and thereby the elegance and beauties of your poems are in a great measure lost to far the greater part of the community. Nevertheless there is no doubt you had sufficient reasons for your conduct—perhaps the wishes of some of the Scottish nobility and gentry, your patrons, who will always relish their own old country style; and your own inclinations for the same. It is evident from several passages in your works, you are as capable of writing in the English as in the Scottish dialect, and I am in great hopes your genius for poetry, from the specimen you have already given, will turn out both for profit and honour to yourself and country. I can by no means advise you now to think of coming to the West Indies, as, I assure you, there is no encouragement for a man of learning and genius here; and am very confident you can do far better in Great Britain, than in Jamaica. I am glad to hear my friends are well, and shall always be happy to hear from you at all convenient opportunities, wishing you success in all your undertakings. I will esteem it a particular favour if you will send me a copy of the other edition you are now printing.

I am, with respect,

Dear Sir, yours, &c.

JOHN HUTCHINSON.

No. XLVI.

TO MR. W. NICOLL.

Mauchline, June 18, 1787.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM now arrived safe in my native country, after a very agreeable jaunt, and have the pleasure to find all my friends well. I breakfasted with your grey-headed, reverend friend, Mr. Smith; and was highly pleased both with the cordial welcome he gave me, and his most excellent appearance and sterling good sense.

I have been with Mr. Miller at Dalswinton, and am to meet him again in August. From my view of the lands and his reception of my bardship, my hopes in that business are rather mended; but still they are but slender.

I am quite charmed with Dumfries folks—Mr. Burnside, the clergyman, in particular, is

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of July, the Dean of Edinburgh prepared to officiate in St. Giles's. The congregation continued quiet till the service began, when an old woman, impelled by sudden indignation, started up, and exclaiming aloud, 'Villain! dost thou say the Mass at my lug!' threw the stool on which she had been sitting, at the Dean's head. A wild uproar commenced that instant. The service was interrupted. The women invaded the desk with execrations and outcries, and the Dean disengaged himself from his surplice to escape from their hands."—*Laing's Hist. of Scotland,* vol. iii. p. 122.

a man whom I shall ever gratefully remember; and his wife, Gude forgie me, I had almost broke the tenth commandment on her account. Simplicity, elegance, good sense, sweetness of disposition, good humour, kind hospitality, are the constituents of her manner and heart; in short—but if I say one word more about her, I shall be directly in love with her.

I never, my friend, thought mankind very capable of any thing generous; but the stateliness of the Patricians in Edinburgh, and the servility of my plebeian brethren, (who, perhaps, formerly eyed me askance), since I returned home, have nearly put me out of conceit altogether with my species. I have bought a pocket Milton which I carry perpetually about with me, in order to study the sentiments—the dauntless magnanimity; the intrepid, unyielding independence, the desperate daring, and noble defiance of hardship, in that great personage, SATAN. 'Tis true, I have just now a little cash; but I am afraid the star that hitherto has shed its malignant, purpose-blasting rays full in my zenith; that noxious planet so baneful in its influences to the rhyming tribe, I much dread it is not yet beneath my horizon.—Misfortune dodges the path of human life; the poetic mind finds itself miserably deranged in, and unfit for the walks of business; add to all, that, thoughtless follies and hare-brained whims, like so many *ignes fatui*, eternally diverging from the right line of sober discretion, sparkle with step-bewitching blaze in the idly-gazing eyes of the poor heedless Bard, till, pop, "he falls like Lucifer, never to hope again." God grant this may be an unreal picture with respect to me! but should it not, I have very little dependence on mankind. I will close my letter with this tribute my heart bids me pay you—the many ties of acquaintance and friendship which I have, or think I have in life, I have felt along the lines, and, d—n them! they are almost all of them of such frail contexture, that I am sure they would not stand the breath of the least adverse breeze of fortune; but from you, my ever dear Sir, I look with confidence for the Apostolic love that shall wait on me "through good report and bad report"—the love which Solomon emphatically says "Is strong as death." My compliments to Mrs. Nicoll, and all the circle of our common friends.

P. S. I shall be in Edinburgh about the latter end of July.

No. XLVII.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR, *Stirling, 28th Aug.* 1787.

HERE am I on my way to Inverness. I have rambled over the rich, fertile carses of Falkirk and Stirling, and am delighted with their appearance: richly waving crops of wheat, barley, &c. but no harvest at all yet, except in one or two places, an old Wife's Ridge.—Yesterday morning I rode from this town up the meandring Devon's banks to pay my respects to some Ayrshire folks at Harvieston. After breakfast, we made a party to go and see the famous Caudron-linn, a remarkable cascade in the Devon, about five miles above Harvieston; and after spending one of the most pleasant days I ever had in my life, I returned to Stirling in the evening. They are a family, Sir, though I had not had any prior tie; though they had not been the brother and sisters of a certain generous friend of mine, I would never forget them. I am told you have not seen them these several years, so you can have very little idea of what these young folks are now. Your brother is as tall as you are, but slender rather than otherwise; and I have the satisfaction to inform you that he is getting the better of those consumptive symptoms which I suppose you know were threatening him. His make, and particularly his manner, resemble you, but he will still have a finer face. (I put in the word *still*, to please Mrs. Hamilton.) Good sense, modesty, and at the same time a just idea of that respect that man owes to man, and has a right in his turn to exact, are striking features in his character; and, what with me is the Alpha and the Omega, he has a heart might adorn the breast of a poet! Grace has a good figure and the look of health and cheerfulness, but nothing else remarkable in her person. I scarcely ever saw so striking a likeness as is between her and your little Beenie; the mouth and chin particularly. She is reserved at first; but as we grew better acquainted, I was delighted with the native frankness of her manner, and the sterling sense of her observation. Of Charlotte, I cannot speak in common terms of admiration: she is not only beautiful, but lovely. Her form is elegant; her features not regular, but they have the smile of sweetness and the settled complacency of good nature in the highest degree; and her complexion, now that she has happily recovered her wonted health, is equal to Miss Burnet's. After the exercise of our riding to the Falls, Charlotte was exactly Dr. Donne's mistress:

> ——— "Her pure and eloquent blood
> Spoke in her cheeks, and so distinctly wrought,
> That one would almost say her body thought."

Her eyes are fascinating; at once expressive of good sense, tenderness, and a noble mind.

I do not give you all this account, my good Sir, to flatter you. I mean it to reproach you. Such relations the first peer in the realm might own with pride; then why do you not keep up more correspondence with these so amiable young folks? I had a thousand questions to

answer about you all: I had to describe the little ones with the minuteness of anatomy. They were highly delighted when I told them that John* was so good a boy, and so fine a scholar, and that Willie† was going on still very pretty; but I have it in commission to tell her from them that beauty is a poor silly bauble without she be good. Miss Chalmers I had left in Edinburgh, but I had the pleasure of meeting with Mrs. Chalmers, only Lady M'Kenzie being rather a little alarmingly ill of a sore-throat, somewhat marr'd our enjoyment.

I shall not be in Ayrshire for four weeks. My most respectful compliments to Mrs. Hamilton, Miss Kennedy, and Dr. M'Kenzie. I shall probably write him from some stage or other.

I am ever, Sir,
Yours most gratefully.

No. XLVIII.

TO MR. WALKER, BLAIR OF ATHOLE.

Inverness, 5th Sept. 1787.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE just time to write the foregoing,‡ and to tell you that it was (at least most part of it), the effusion of an half hour I spent at Bruar. I do not mean it was *extempore*, for I have endeavoured to brush it up as well as Mr. N———'s chat, and the jogging of the chaise, would allow. It eases my heart a good deal, as rhyme is the coin with which a poet pays his debts of honour or gratitude. What I owe to the noble family of Athole, of the first kind, I shall ever proudly boast; what I owe of the last, so help me God in my hour of need, I shall never forget.

The little "angel band!—I declare I prayed for them very sincerely to-day at the Fall of Fyars. I shall never forget the fine family-piece I saw at Blair; the amiable, the truly noble Duchess, with her smiling little seraph in her lap, at the head of the table; the lovely "olive plants," as the Hebrew bard finely says, round the happy mother; the beautiful Mrs. G——; the lovely, sweet Miss C. &c. I wish I had the powers of Guido to do them justice! My Lord Duke's kind hospitality, markedly kind, indeed——Mr G. of F——'s charms of conversation—Sir W. M——'s friendship—in short, the recollection of all that polite, agreeable company, raises an honest glow in my bosom.

No. XLIX.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

Edinburgh, 17th Sept. 1787.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

I ARRIVED here safe yesterday evening, after a tour of twenty-two days, and travelling near six hundred miles, windings included. My farthest stretch was about ten miles beyond Inverness. I went through the heart of the Highlands, by Crieff, Taymouth, the famous seat of Lord Breadalbane, down the Tay, among cascades and druidical circles of stones to Dunkeld, a seat of the Duke of Athole; thence cross Tay, and up one of his tributary streams to Blair of Athole, another of the Duke's seats, where I had the honour of spending nearly two days with his Grace and family; thence many miles through a wild country, among cliffs grey with eternal snows, and gloomy savage glens, till I crossed Spey and went down the stream through Strathspey, so famous in Scottish music, Badenoch, &c. till I reached Grant Castle, where I spent half a day with Sir James Grant and family; and then crossed the country for Fort George, but called by the way at Cawdor, the ancient seat of Macbeath; there I saw the identical bed in which, tradition says, King Duncan was murdered: lastly, from Fort George to Inverness.

I returned by the coast, through Nairn, Forres, and so on, to Aberdeen; thence to Stonehive, where James Burnes, from Montrose, met me by appointment. I spent two days among our relations, and found our aunts, Jean and Isabel, still alive, and hale old women. John Caird, though born the same year with our father, walks as vigorously as I can; they have had several letters from his son in New York. William Brand is likewise a stout old fellow: but further particulars I delay till I see you, which will be in two or three weeks. The rest of my stages are not worth rehearsing: warm as I was from Ossian's country, where I had seen his very grave, what cared I for fishing towns or fertile carses? I slept at the famous Brodie of Brodie's one night, and dined at Gordon Castle next day with the Duke, Duchess, and family. I am thinking to cause my old mare to meet me, by means of John Ronald, at Glasgow; but you shall hear farther from me before I leave Edinburgh. My duty, and many compliments from the north, to my mother, and my brotherly compliments to the rest. I have been trying for a birth for William, but am not likely to be successful.—Farewell.

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* This is the "*wee curlie Johnnie*," mentioned in Burns's dedication to Gavin Hamilton, Esq. To this gentleman, and every branch of the family, the Editor is indebted for much information respecting the poet, and very gratefully acknowledges the kindness shewn to himself.

† Now married to the Rev. John Tod, Minister of Mauchline.

‡ "The humble Petition of Bruar-Water to the Duke of Athole."

No. L.

FROM MR. R——.

SIR, *Ochtertyre, 22d October*, 1787.

'TWAS only yesterday I got Colonel Edmonstoun's answer, that neither the words of *Down the burn Davie*, nor *Dainty Davie* (I forgot which you mentioned), were written by Colonel G. Crawford. Next time I meet him, I will inquire about his cousin's poetical talents.

Enclosed are the inscriptions you requested, and a letter to Mr. Young, whose company and musical talents will, I am persuaded, be a feast to you.* Nobody can give you better hints, as to your present plan, than he. Receive also Omeron Cameron, which seemed to make such a deep impression on your imagination, that I am not without hopes it will beget something to delight the public in due time: and, no doubt, the circumstances of this little tale might be varied or extended, so as to make part of a pastoral comedy. Age or wounds might have kept Omeron at home, whilst his countrymen were in the field. His station may be somewhat varied, without losing his simplicity and kindness . . . . A group of characters, male and female, connected with the plot, might be formed from his family, or some neighbouring one of rank. It is not indispensable that the guest should be a man of high station; nor is the political quarrel in which he is engaged, of much importance, unless to call forth the exercise of generosity and faithfulness, grafted on patriarchal hospitality. To introduce state affairs, would raise the style above comedy; though a small spice of them would season the converse of swains. Upon this head I cannot say more than to recommend the study of the character of Eumæus in the Odyssey, which, in Mr. Pope's translation, is an exquisite and invaluable drawing from nature, that would suit some of our country elders of the present day.

There must be love in the plot, and a happy discovery; and peace and pardon may be the reward of hospitality, and honest attachment to misguided principles. When you have once thought of a plot, and brought the story into form, Dr. Blacklock, or Mr. H. Mackenzie, may be useful in dividing it into acts and scenes; for in these matters one must pay some attention to certain rules of the drama. These you could afterwards fill up at your leisure. But, whilst I presume to give a few well-meant hints, let me advise you to study the spirit of my namesake's dialogue,* which is natural without being low, and, under the trammels of verse, is such as country people in their situations speak every day. You have only to bring *down* your own strain a very little. A great plan, such as this, would concenter all your ideas, which facilitates the execution, and makes it a part of one's pleasure.

I approve of your plan of retiring from din and dissipation to a farm of very moderate size, sufficient to find exercise for mind and body, but not so great as to absorb better things. And if some intellectual pursuit be well chosen and steadily pursued, it will be more lucrative than most farms, in this age of rapid improvement.

Upon this subject, as your well-wisher and admirer, permit me to go a step farther. Let

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* These Inscriptions, so much admired by Burns, are below:—

WRITTEN IN 1768.

FOR THE SALICTUM AT OCHTERTYRE.

SALUBRITATIS voluptatisque causa,
Hoc Salictum,
Paludem olim infidam,
Mihi meisque desieco et exorno.
Hic, procul negotiis strepituque
Innocuis deliciis
Silvulas inter nascentes reptandi,
Apiumque labores suspiciendi,
Fruor,
Hic, si faxit Deus opt. max.
Prope hunc fontem pellucidum.
Cum quadam juventutis amico superstite,
Sæpe conquiescam, senex,
Contentus modicis, meoque lætus!
Sin aliter—
Ævique paululum supersit,
Vos silvulæ, et amici,
Cæteraque amœna,
Valete, diuque lætamini!

. . . . . .

ENGLISHED.

To improve both air and soil,
I drain and decorate this plantation of willows,
Which was lately an unprofitable morass.
Here, far from noise and strife,
I love to wander,
Now fondly marking the progress of my trees,
Now studying the bee, its arts and manners.
Here, if it pleases Almighty God,
May I often rest in the evening of life,
Near that transparent fountain,
With some surviving friend of my youth;
Contented with a competency,
And happy with my lot.
If vain these humble wishes,
And life draws near a close,
Ye trees and friends,
And whatever else is dear,
Farewell, and long may ye flourish.

. . . . . .

ABOVE THE DOOR OF THE HOUSE.

WRITTEN IN 1775.

MIHI meisque utinam contingat,
Prope Taichi marginem,
Avito in Agello,
Rene vivere fausteque mori!

ENGLISHED.

On the banks of the Teith,
In the small but sweet inheritance
Of my fathers,
May I and mine live in peace,
And die in joyful hope!

. . . . . .

These inscriptions, and the translations, are in the hand-writing of Mr. R——.

* Allan Ramsay, in the Gentle Shepherd.

those bright talents which the Almighty has bestowed on you, be henceforth employed to the noble purpose of supporting the cause of truth and virtue. An imagination so varied and forcible as yours, may do this in many different modes; nor is it necessary to be always serious, which you have been to good purpose; good morals may be recommended in a comedy, or even in a song. Great allowances are due to the heat and inexperience of youth;—and few poets can boast, like Thomson, of never having written a line, which, dying, they would wish to blot. In particular, I wish you to keep clear of the thorny walks of satire, which makes a man a hundred enemies for one friend, and is doubly dangerous when one is supposed to extend the slips and weaknesses of individuals to their sect or party. About modes of faith, serious and excellent men have always differed; and there are certain curious questions, which may afford scope to men of metaphysical heads, but seldom mend the heart or temper. Whilst these points are beyond human ken, it is sufficient that all our sects concur in their views of morals. You will forgive me for these hints.

Well! what think you of good lady C.? It is a pity she is so deaf, and speaks so indistinctly. Her house is a specimen of the mansions of our gentry of the last age, when hospitality and elevation of mind were conspicuous amidst plain fare and plain furniture. I shall be glad to hear from you at times, if it were no more than to show that you take the effusions of an obscure man like me in good part. I beg my best respects to Dr. and Mrs. Blacklock,*

And am, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

J. RAMSAY.

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* TALE OF OMERON CAMERON.

In one of the wars betwixt the Crown of Scotland and the Lords of the Isles, Alexander Stewart, Earl of Mar (a distinguished character in the fifteenth century), and Donald Stewart, Earl of Caithness, had the command of the royal army. They marched into Lochaber, with a view of attacking a body of M'Donalds, commanded by Donald Balloch, and posted upon an arm of the sea which intersects that country. Having timely intelligence of their approach, the insurgents got off precipitately to the opposite shore in their curaghs, or boats covered with skins. The king's troops encamped in full security; but the M'Donalds, returning about midnight, surprised them, killed the Earl of Caithness, and destroyed or dispersed the whole army.

The Earl of Mar escaped in the dark, without any attendants, and made for the more hilly part of the country. In the course of his flight he came to the house of a poor man, whose name was Omeron Cameron. The landlord welcomed his guest with the utmost kindness; but, as there was no meat in the house, he told his wife he would directly kill *Mool Odhar*, † to feed the stranger. "Kill our only cow!" said she, "our own and our little children's principal support!" More attentive, however, to the present call for hospitality, than to the remonstrances of his wife, or the future exigencies of his family, he killed the cow. The best and tenderest parts were immediately roasted before the fire, and plenty of *innirich*, or Highland soup, prepared to conclude their meal.—The whole family and their guest ate heartily, and the evening was spent as usual, in telling tales and singing songs beside a cheerful fire. Bed-time came; Omeron brushed the hearth, spread the cow hide upon it, and desired the stranger to lie down. The Earl wrapped his plaid about him, and slept sound on the hide, whilst the family betook themselves to rest in a corner of the same room.

. . . . . .

Next morning they had a plentiful breakfast, and at his departure his guest asked Cameron, if he knew whom he had entertained? "You may probably," answered he, "be one of the king's officers; but whoever you are, you came here in distress, and here it was my duty to protect you. To what my cottage afforded, you are most welcome."—"Your guest, then," replied the other, "is the Earl of Mar: and if hereafter you fall into any misfortune, fail not to come to the castle of Kildrummie."—"My blessing be with you! noble stranger," said Omeron; "if I am ever in distress, you shall soon see me."

The royal army was soon after re-assembled; and the insurgents, finding themselves unable to make head against it, dispersed. The M'Donalds, however, got notice that Omeron had been the Earl's host, and forced him to fly the country. He came with his wife and children to the gate of Kildrummie Castle, and required admittance with a confidence which hardly corresponded with his habit and appearance. The porter told him rudely, his Lordship was at dinner, and must not be disturbed. He became noisy and importunate: at last his name was announced. Upon hearing that it was Omeron Cameron, the Earl started from his seat, and is said to have exclaimed in a sort of poetical stanza, "I was a night in his house, and fared most plentifully; but naked of clothes was my bed. Omeron from Breugach is an excellent fellow!" He was introduced into the great hall, and received with the welcome he deserved. Upon hearing how he had been treated, the Earl gave him a four merk land near the castle; and it is said there are still in the country a number of Camerons descended of this Highland Eumæus.

† Mool Odhar, *i. e.* the brown humble cow.

No. LI.

FROM MR. W ———.

Athole House, 13th September, 1787.

Your letter of the 5th reached me only on the 11th; what awkward route it had taken I know not; but it deprived me of the pleasure of writing to you in the manner you proposed, as you must have left Dundee before a letter could possibly have got there. I hope your disappointment on being forced to leave us was as great as appeared from your expressions. This is the best consolation for the greatness of ours. I still think with vexation on that ill-timed indisposition which lost me a day's enjoyment of a man (I speak without flattery) possessed of those very dispositions and talents I most admire; one . . . . . .

. . . . You know how anxious the Duke was to have another day of you, and to let Mr. Dundas have the pleasure of your conversation as the best dainty with which he could entertain an honoured guest. You know likewise the eagerness the ladies showed to detain you; but perhaps you do not know the scheme which they devised, with their usual fertility in resources. One of the servants was sent to your driver to bribe him to loosen or pull off a shoe from one of his horses, but the ambush

failed. *Proh mirum!* The driver was *incorruptible.* Your verses have given us much delight, and I think will produce their proper effect.* They produced a powerful one immediately; for the morning after I read them, we all set out in procession to the Bruar, where none of the ladies had been these seven or eight years, and again enjoyed them there. The passages we most admired are the description of the *dying trouts.* Of the high fall "twisting strength," is a happy picture of the upper part. The characters of the birds, "mild and mellow," is the thrush itself. The benevolent anxiety for their happiness and safety I highly approve. The two stanzas beginning "Here haply too"—*darkly dashing* is most descriptively Ossianic.

. . . . . .

Here I cannot deny myself the pleasure of mentioning an incident which happened yesterday at the Bruar. As we passed the door of a most miserable hovel, an old woman curtsied to us with looks of such poverty, and such contentment, that each of us involuntarily gave her some money. She was astonished, and in the confusion of her gratitude, invited us in. Miss C. and I, that we might not hurt her delicacy, entered—but, good God, what wretchedness! It was a cow-house—her own cottage had been burnt last winter. The poor old creature stood perfectly silent—looked at Miss C. then to the money, and burst into tears—Miss C. joined her, and, with a vehemence of sensibility, took out her purse, and emptied it into the old woman's lap. What a charming scene!—A sweet accomplished girl of seventeen in so angelic a situation! Take your pencil and paint her in your most glowing tints.—Hold her up amidst the darkness of this scene of human woe, to the icy dames that flaunt through the gaieties of life, without ever feeling one generous, one great emotion.

Two days after you left us, I went to Taymouth. It is a charming place, but still I think art has been too busy. Let me be your Cicerone for two days at Dunkeld, and you will acknowledge that in the beauties of naked nature we are not surpassed. The loch, the Gothic arcade, and the fall of the hermitage, gave me most delight. But I think the last has not been taken proper advantage of. The hermitage is too much in the common-place style. Every body expects the couch, the bookpress, and the hairy gown. The Duke's idea I think better. A rich and elegant apartment is an excellent contrast to a scene of Alpine horrors.

I must now beg your permission (unless you have some other design) to have your verses printed. They appear to me extremely correct, and some particular stanzas would give universal pleasure. Let me know, however, if you incline to give them any farther touches.

Were they in some of the public papers, we could more easily disseminate them among our friends, which many of us are anxious to do.

When you pay your promised visit to the Braes of Ochtertyre, Mr. and Mrs. Graham of Balgowan beg to have the pleasure of conducting you to the bower of *Bessy Bell and Mary Gray,* which is now in their possession. The Duchess would give any consideration for another sight of your letter to Dr. Moore; we must fall upon some method of procuring it for her. I shall enclose this to our mutual friend Dr. B———, who may forward it. I shall be extremely happy to hear from you at your first leisure. Enclose your letter in a cover addressed to the Duke of Athole, Dunkeld.

God bless you,

J—— W——.

* "The humble petition of Bruar-Water to the Duke of Athole."

No. LII.

FROM MR. A—— M——.

SIR, *6th October,* 1787.

HAVING just arrived from abroad, I had your poems put into my hands: the pleasure I received in reading them, has induced me to solicit your liberty to publish them amongst a number of our countrymen in America, (to which place I shall shortly return), and where they will be a treat of such excellence, that i would be an injury to your merit and their feeling to prevent their appearing in public.

Receive the following hastily-written lines from a well-wisher.

FAIR fa' your pen, my dainty Rob,
Your leisom way o' writing,
Whiles, glowring o'er your warks I sob,
Whiles laugh, whiles downright greeting
Your sonsie tykes may charm a chiel,
Their words are wondrous bonny,
But guid Scotch drink the truth does say
It is as guid as ony
Wi' you this day.

Poor Mailie, troth, I'll nae but think,
Ye did the poor thing wrang,
To leave her tether'd on the brink
Of stank sae wide and lang;
Her dying words upbraid ye sair,
Cry fye on your neglect;
Guid faith! gin ye had got play fair,
This deed had stretch'd your neck
That mournfu' day.

But, wae's me, how dare I fin' faut,
Wi' sic a winsome bardie,

Wha great an' sma's begun to daut,
And tak' him by the gardie ;
It sets na ony lawland chiel,
Like you to verse or rhyme,
For few like you can fley the de'il,
And skelp auld wither'd Time
On ony day.

It's fair to praise ilk canty callan,
Be he of purest fame,
If he but tries to raise as Allan,
Auld Scotia's bonny name ;
To you, therefore, in humble rhyme,
Better I canna gi'e,
And tho' it's but a swatch of thine,
Accept these lines frae me,
Upo' this day.

Frae Jock o' Groats to bonny Tweed,
Frae that e'en to the line,
In ilka place where Scotsmen bleed,
There shall your bardship shine ;
Ilk honest chiel wha reads your buick,
Will there aye meet a brither,
He lang may seek, and lang will look,
Ere he fin' sic anither
On ony day.

Feart that my cruicket verse should spairge
Some wark of wordie mak',
I'se nae mair o' this head enlarge,
But now my farewell tak' :
Lang may you live, lang may you write,
And sing like English Weischell,
This prayer I do myself indite,
From yours still, A——— M———,
This very day.

No. LIII.

FROM MR. J. RAMSAY,

TO THE

REVEREND W. YOUNG, AT ERSKINE.

DEAR SIR, *Ochtertyre, 22d Oct.* 1787.

ALLOW me to introduce Mr. Burns, whose poems, I dare say, have given you much pleasure. Upon a personal acquaintance, I doubt not, you will relish the man as much as his works, in which there is a rich vein of intellectual ore. He has heard some of our Highland *luinigs* or songs played, which delighted him so much that he has made words to one or two of them, which will render these more popular. As he has thought of being in your quarter, I am persuaded you will not think it labour lost to indulge the poet of nature with a sample of those sweet artless melodies, which only want to be *married* (in Milton's phrase) to congenial words. I wish we could conjure up the ghost of Joseph M'D. to infuse into our bard a portion of his enthusiasm for those neglected airs, which do not suit the fastidious musicians of the present hour. But if it be true that Corelli (whom I looked on as the Homer of music) is out of date, it is no proof of their taste ;—this, however, is going out of my province. You can show Mr. Burns the manner of singing these same *luinigs ;* and, if he can humour it in words, I do not despair of seeing one of them sung upon the stage, in the original style, round a napkin.

I am very sorry we are likely to meet so seldom in this neighbourhood. It is one of the greatest drawbacks that attends obscurity, that one has so few opportunities of cultivating acquaintances at a distance. I hope, however, some time or other, to have the pleasure of beating up your quarters at Erskine, and of hauling you away to Paisley, &c. ; meanwhile I beg to be remembered to Messrs. Boog and Mylne.

If Mr. B. goes by ——, give him a billet on our friend Mr. Stuart, who, I presume, does not dread the frown of his *diocesan*.

I am, Dear Sir,
Your most obedient humble servant,
J. RAMSAY.

No. LIV.

FROM MR. RAMSAY,

TO

DR. BLACKLOCK.

DEAR SIR, *Ochtertyre, 27th Oct.* 1787.

I RECEIVED yours by Mr. Burns, and give you many thanks for giving me an opportunity of conversing with a man of his calibre. He will, I doubt not, let you know what passed between us on the subject of my hints, to which I have made additions, in a letter sent him t'other day to your care.

. . . . . .

You may tell Mr. Burns, when you see him, that Colonel Edmonstoune told me t'other day, that his cousin, Colonel George Crawford, was no poet, but a great singer of songs ; but that his eldest brother Robert (by a former marriage) had a great turn that way, having written the words of *The Bush aboon Traquair*, and *Tweedside*. That the Mary to whom it was addressed was Mary Stewart of the Castlemilk family, afterwards wife of Mr. John Relches. The Colonel never saw Robert Crawford, though he was at his burial fifty-five years ago. He was a pretty young man, and had lived long in France. Lady Ankerville is his niece, and may know more of his poetical vein. An epitaph-

monger like me might moralize upon the vanity of life, and the vanity of those sweet effusions. —But I have hardly room to offer my best compliments to Mrs. Blacklock ; and I am,

Dear Doctor,
Your most obedient humble servant,
J. RAMSAY.

No. LV.

FROM MR. JOHN MURDOCH.

MY DEAR SIR, *London, 28th Oct.* 1787.

As my friend, Mr. Brown, is going from this place to your neighbourhood, I embrace the opportunity of telling you that I am yet alive, tolerably well, and always in expectation of being better. By the much-valued letters before me, I see that it was my duty to have given you this intelligence about three years and nine months ago ; and have nothing to allege as an excuse but that we poor, busy, bustling bodies in London, are so much taken up with the various pursuits in which we are here engaged, that we seldom think of any person, creature, place, or thing, that is absent. But this is not altogether the case with me ; for I often think of you, and *Hornie*, and *Russel*, and an *unfathomed depth*, and *lowan brunstane*, all in the same minute, although you and they are (as I suppose) at a considerable distance. I flatter myself, however, with the pleasing thought, that you and I shall meet some time or other either in Scotland or England. If ever you come hither, you will have the satisfaction of seeing your poems relished by the Caledonians in London, full as much as they can be by those of Edinburgh. We frequently repeat some of your verses in our Caledonian society ; and you may believe, that I am not a little vain that I have had some share in cultivating such a genius. I was not absolutely certain that you were the author, till a few days ago, when I made a visit to Mrs. Hill, Dr. M'Comb's eldest daughter, who lives in town, and who told me that she was informed of it by a letter from her sister in Edinburgh, with whom you had been in company when in that capital.

Pray let me know if you have any intention of visiting this huge, overgrown metropolis? It would afford matter for a large poem. Here you would have an opportunity of indulging your vein in the study of mankind, perhaps to a greater degree than in any city upon the face of the globe ; for the inhabitants of London, as you know, are a collection of all nations, kindreds, and tongues, who make it, as it were, the centre of their commerce.

. . . . . .

Present my respectful compliments to Mrs. Burns, to my dear friend Gilbert, and all the rest of her amiable children. May the Father of the universe bless you all with those principles and dispositions that the best of parents took such uncommon pains to instil into your minds from your earliest infancy ! May you live as he did ! if you do, you can never be unhappy. I feel myself grown serious all at once, and affected in a manner I cannot describe. I shall only add, that it is one of the greatest pleasures I promise myself before I die, that of seeing the family of a man whose memory I revere more than that of any person that ever I was acquainted with.

I am, my dear Friend,
Yours sincerely,
JOHN MURDOCH.

No. LVI.

FROM MR. ———.

SIR, *Gordon Castle, 31st October,* 1787.

If you were not sensible of your fault as well as of your loss in leaving this place so suddenly, I should condemn you to starve upon *cauld kail* for *ae towmont* at least ; and as for *Dick Latine,** your travelling companion, without banning him *wi' a'* the curses contained in your letter, (which he'll *no* value a *bawbee*), I should give him nought but *Stra'bogie castocks* to chew for *sax ouks*, or aye until he was as sensible of his error as you seem to be of yours.

. . . . . .

Your song I showed without producing the author ; and it was judged by the Duchess to be the production of Dr. Beattie. I sent a copy of it, by her Grace's desire, to a Mrs. M'Pherson in Badenoch, who sings *Morag* and all other Gaelic songs in great perfection. I have recorded it likewise, by Lady Charlotte's desire, in a book belonging to her ladyship, where it is in company with a great many other poems and verses, some of the writers of which are no less eminent for their political than for their poetical abilities. When the Duchess was informed that you were the author she wished you had written the verses in Scotch.

Any letter directed to me here will come to hand safely, and, if sent under the Duke's cover, it will likewise come free ; that is, as long as the Duke is in this country.

I am, Sir, yours sincerely.

No. LVII.

FROM THE REV. JOHN SKINNER.

SIR, *Linshart, 14th Nov.* 1787.

Your kind return without date, but of postmark October 25th, came to my hand only this day ; and, to testify my punctuality to my po-

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* Mr. Nicoll.

etic engagement, I sit down immediately to answer it in kind. Your acknowledgment of my poor but just encomiums on your surprising genius, and your opinion of my rhyming excursions, are both, I think, by far too high. The difference between our two tracts of education and ways of life is entirely in your favour, and gives you the preference every manner of way. I know a classical education will not create a versifying taste, but it mightily improves and assists it; and though, where both these meet, there may sometimes be ground for approbation, yet where taste appears single, as it were, and neither cramped nor supported by acquisition, I will always sustain the justice of its prior claim to applause. A small portion of taste, this way, I have had almost from childhood, especially in the old Scottish dialect: and it is as old a thing as I remember, my fondness for *Christ kirk o' the Green*, which I had by heart ere I was twelve years of age, and which, some years ago, I attempted to turn into Latin verse. While I was young, I dabbled a good deal in these things; but, on getting the black gown, I gave it pretty much over, till my daughters grew up, who, being all good singers, plagued me for words to some of their favourite tunes, and so extorted these effusions, which have made a public appearance beyond my expectations, and contrary to my intentions, at the same time that I hope there is nothing to be found in them uncharacteristic, or unbecoming the cloth, which I would always wish to see respected.

As to the assistance you propose from me in the undertaking you are engaged in,* I am sorry I cannot give it so far as I could wish, and you, perhaps, expect. My daughters, who were my only intelligencers, are all *foris familiate*, and the old woman their mother has lost that taste. There are two from my own pen, which I might give you, if worth the while. One to the old Scotch tune of *Dumbarton's Drums*.

The other perhaps you have met with, as your noble friend the Duchess has, I am told, heard of it. It was squeezed out of me by a brother parson in her neighbourhood, to accommodate a new Highland reel for the Marquis's birth-day, to the stanza of

"Tune your fiddles, tune them sweetly," &c.

If this last answer your purpose, you may have it from a brother of mine, Mr. James Skinner, writer in Edinburgh, who, I believe, can give the music too.

There is another humorous thing, I have heard said to be done by the Catholic priest Geddes, and which hit my taste much:

"There was a wee wifeikie was coming frae the fair,
Had gotten a little drapikie, which bred her meikle care;
It took upo' the wifie's heart, and she began to spew,
And quo' the wee wifeikie, I wish I binna fou,
I wish, &c. &c.

I have heard of another new composition, by a young ploughman of my acquaintance, that I am vastly pleased with, to the tune of *The humours of Glen*, which I fear won't do, as the music, I am told, is of Irish original. I have mentioned these, such as they are, to show my readiness to oblige you, and to contribute my mite, if I could, to the patriotic work you have in hand, and which I wish all success to. You have only to notify your mind, and what you want of the above shall be sent you.

Meantime, while you are thus publicly, I may say, employed, do not sheath your own proper and piercing weapon. From what I have seen of yours already, I am inclined to hope for much good. One lesson of virtue and morality, delivered in your amusing style, and from such as you, will operate more than dozens would do from such as me, who shall be told it is our employment, and be never more minded: whereas, from a pen like yours, as being one of the many, what comes will be admired. Admiration will produce regard, and regard will leave an impression, especially *when example goes along*.

Now binna saying I'm ill bred,
Else, by my troth, I'll not be glad
For cadgers, ye have heard it said,
And sic like fry,
Maun aye be harland in their trade,
And sae maun I.

Wishing you from my poet-pen, all success, and in my other character, all happiness and heavenly direction,

I remain, with esteem,
Your sincere friend,
JOHN SKINNER.

No. LVIII.

FROM MRS. ROSS.

SIR, *Kilravock Castle, 30th Nov.* 1787.

I HOPE you will do me the justice to believe, that it was no defect in gratitude for your punctual performance of your parting promise, that has made me so long in acknowledging it, but merely the difficulty I had in getting the Highland songs you wished to have, accurately noted; they are at last enclosed: but how shall I convey along with them those graces they acquired from the melodious voice of one of the fair spirits of the hill of Kildrummie! *These* I must leave to your imagination to supply. It has powers sufficient to transport you to her

* "A plan of publishing a complete collection of Scottish Songs," &c.

side, to recall her accents, and to make them still vibrate in the ears of memory. To her I am indebted for getting the enclosed notes. They are clothed with "*thoughts* that breathe, and *words* that burn." *These*, however, being in an *unknown* tongue to you, you must again have recourse to that same fertile imagination of yours to interpret them, and suppose a lover's description of the beauties of an adored mistress —why did I say unknown? The language of love is an universal one, that seems to have escaped the confusion of Babel, and to be understood by all nations.

I rejoice to find that you were pleased with so many things, persons, and places in your northern tour, because it leads me to hope you may be induced to revisit them again. That the old castle of K———k, and its inhabitants, were amongst these, adds to my satisfaction. I am even vain enough to admit your very flattering application of the line of Addison's; at any rate, allow me to believe that "friendship will maintain the ground she has occupied" in both our hearts, in spite of absence, and that, when we do meet, it will be as acquaintance of a score of years standing; and on this footing, consider me as interested in the future course of your fame, so splendidly commenced. Any communications of the progress of your muse will be received with great gratitude, and the fire of your genius will have power to warm, even us, frozen sisters of the north.

The friends of K———k and K———e unite in cordial regards to you. When you incline to figure either in your idea, suppose some of us reading your poems, and some of us singing your songs, and my little Hugh looking at your picture, and you'll seldom be wrong. We remember Mr. N. with as much good will as we do any body, who hurried Mr. Burns from us.

Farewell, Sir, I can only contribute the *widow's mite* to the esteem and admiration excited by your merits and genius, but this I give as she did, with all my heart—being sincerely yours, E. R.

No. LIX.

TO —— DALRYMPLE, Esq. OF ORANGEFIELD.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 1787.

I SUPPOSE the devil is so elated with his success with you, that he is determined by a *coup de main* to complete his purposes on you all at once, in making you a poet. I broke open the letter you sent me; hummed over the rhymes; and, as I saw they were extempore, said to myself they were very well: but when I saw at the bottom a name that I shall ever value with grateful respect, "I gapit wide but naething spak." I was nearly as much struck as the friends of Job, of affliction-bearing memory, when they sat down with him seven days and seven nights, and spake not a word.

. . . . . .

I am naturally of a superstitious cast, and as soon as my wonder-scared imagination regained its consciousness and resumed its functions, I cast about what this mania of yours might portend. My foreboding ideas had the wide stretch of possibility; and several events, great in their magnitude, and important in their consequences, occurred to my fancy. The downfal of the conclave, or the crushing of the cork rumps; a ducal coronet to Lord George G—— and the protestant interest; or St. Peter's keys to . . . . . .

You want to know how I come on. I am just in *statu quo*, or, not to insult a gentleman with my Latin, "in auld use and wont." The noble Earl of Glencairn took me by the hand to-day, and interested himself in my concerns, with a goodness like that benevolent being, whose image he so richly bears. He is a stronger proof of the immortality of the soul, than any that philosophy ever produced. A mind like his can never die. Let the worshipful squire, H. L. or the reverend Mass J. M. go into their primitive nothing. At best they are but ill-digested lumps of chaos, only one of them strongly tinged with bituminous particles and sulphureous effluvia. But my noble patron, eternal as the heroic swell of magnanimity, and the generous throb of benevolence, shall look on with princely eye at "the war of elements, the wreck of matter, and the crash of worlds."

THE following fragments are all that now exist of twelve or fourteen of the finest letters that Burns ever wrote. In an evil hour, the originals were thrown into the fire by the late Mrs. Adair of Scarborough; the *Charlotte* so often mentioned in this correspondence, and the lady to whom "*The Banks of the Devon*" is addressed. E.

No. LX.

TO MISS MARGARET CHALMERS,

(NOW MRS. HAY, OF EDINBURGH).

Sept. 26, 1787.

I SEND Charlotte the first number of the songs; I would not wait for the second number; I hate delays in little marks of friendship, as I hate dissimulation in the language of the heart. I am determined to pay Charlotte a poetic compliment, if I could hit on some glorious old Scotch air, in number second.*

* Of the Scots Musical Museum.

You will see a small attempt on a shred of paper in the book; but though Dr. Blacklock commended it very highly, I am not just satisfied with it myself. I intend to make it description of some kind: the whining cant of love, except in real passion, and by a masterly hand, is to me as insufferable as the preaching cant of old Father Smeaton, Whig-minister at Kilmaurs. Darts, flames, cupids, loves, graces, and all that farrago, are just a Mauchline . . . . —a senseless rabble.

I got an excellent poetic epistle yesternight from the old, venerable author of Tullochgorum, John of Badenyon, &c. I suppose you know he is a clergyman. It is by far the finest poetic compliment I ever got. I will send you a copy of it.

I go on Thursday or Friday to Dumfries to wait on Mr. Miller about his farms.—Do tell that to Lady M'Kenzie, that she may give me credit for a little wisdom. "I wisdom dwell with prudence." What a blessed fire-side! How happy should I be to pass a winter evening under their venerable roof! and smoke a pipe of tobacco, or drink water-gruel with them! What solemn, lengthened, laughter-quashing gravity of phiz! What sage remarks on the good-for-nothing sons and daughters of indiscretion and folly! And what frugal lessons, as we straitened the fire-side circle, on the uses of the poker and tongs!

Miss N. is very well, and begs to be remembered in the old way to you. I used all my eloquence, all the persuasive flourishes of the hand, and heart-melting modulation of periods in my power, to urge her out to Herveiston, but all in vain. My rhetoric seems quite to have lost its effect on the lovely half of mankind. I have seen the day—but that is a "tale of other years."—In my conscience I believe that my heart has been so oft on fire that it is absolutely vitrified. I look on the sex with something like the admiration with which I regard the starry sky in a frosty December night. I admire the beauty of the Creator's workmanship; I am charmed with the wild but graceful eccentricity of their motions, and—wish them good night. I mean this with respect to a certain passion *dont j' ai eu l'honneur d'etre un miserable esclave:* as for friendship, you and Charlotte have given me pleasure, permanent pleasure, "which the world cannot give, nor take away," I hope; and which will outlast the heavens and the earth.

Without date.

I HAVE been at Dumfries, and at one visit more shall be decided about a farm in that country. I am rather hopeless in it; but as my brother is an excellent farmer, and is, besides, an exceedingly prudent, sober man, (qualities which are only a younger brother's fortune in our family), I am determined, if my Dumfries business fail me, to return into partnership with him, and at our leisure take another farm in the neighbourhood. I assure you I look for high compliments from you and Charlotte on this very sage instance of my unfathomable, incomprehensible wisdom. Talking of Charlotte, I must tell her that I have to the best of my power, paid her a poetic compliment, now completed. The air is admirable: true old Highland. It was the tune of a Gaelic song which an Inverness lady sung me when I was there; and I was so charmed with it that I begged her to write me a set of it from her singing; for it had never been set before. I am fixed that it shall go in Johnson's next number; so Charlotte and you need not spend your precious time in contradicting me. I won't say the poetry is first-rate; though I am convinced it is very well: and, what is not always the case with compliments to ladies, it is not only *sincere* but *just.*

(*Here follows the song of "The Banks of the Devon."*)

Edinburgh, Nov. 21, 1787.

I HAVE one vexatious fault to the kindly-welcome, well filled sheet which I owe to your and Charlotte's goodness—it contains too much sense, sentiment, and good-spelling. It is impossible that even you two, whom I declare to my God, I will give credit for any degree of excellence the sex are capable of attaining, it is impossible you can go on to correspond at that rate; so like those who, Shenstone says, retire because they have made a good speech, I shall after a few letters hear no more of you. I insist that you shall write whatever comes first: what you see, what you read, what you hear, what you admire, what you dislike, trifles, bagatelles, nonsense; or to fill up a corner, e'en put down a laugh at full length. Now none of your polite hints about flattery: I leave that to your lovers, if you have or shall have any; though thank heaven I have found at last two girls who can be luxuriantly happy in their own minds and with one another, without that commonly necessary appendage to female bliss, A LOVER.

Charlotte and you are just two favourite resting places for my soul in her wanderings through the weary, thorny wilderness of this world—God knows I am ill-fitted for the struggle: I glory in being a Poet, and I want to be thought a wise man—I would fondly be generous, and I wish to be rich. After all, I am afraid I am a lost subject. "Some folk hae a hantle o' fauts, an' I'm but a ne'er-do-weel."

Afternoon.—To close the melancholy reflections at the end of last sheet, I shall just add a piece of devotion commonly known in Carrick, by the title of the "Wabster's grace."

"Some say we're thieves, and e'en sae are we,
Some say we lie, and e'en sae do we!
Guide forgie us, and I hope sae will he!
——Up and to your looms, lads."

Edinburgh, Dec. 12, 1787.

I AM here under the care of a surgeon, with a bruised limb extended on a cushion; and the tints of my mind vying with the livid horror preceding a midnight thunder-storm. A drunken coachman was the cause of the first, and incomparably the lightest evil; misfortune, bodily constitution, hell and myself, have formed a "Quadruple Alliance" to guarantee the other. I got my fall on Saturday, and am getting slowly better.

I have taken tooth and nail to the bible, and am got through the five books of Moses, and half way in Joshua. It is really a glorious book. I sent for my bookbinder to-day, and ordered him to get me an octavo bible in sheets, the best paper and print in town; and bind it with all the elegance of his craft.

I would give my best song to my worst enemy, I mean the merit of making it, to have you and Charlotte by me. You are angelic creatures, and would pour oil and wine into my wounded spirit.

I enclose you a proof copy of the "Banks of the Devon," which present with my best wishes to Charlotte. The "Ochil-hills," you shall probably have next week for yourself. None of your fine speeches!

Edinburgh, Dec. 19, 1787.

I BEGIN this letter in answer to yours of the 17th current, which is not yet cold since I read it. The atmosphere of my soul is vastly clearer than when I wrote you last. For the first time, yesterday I crossed the room on crutches. It would do your heart good too see my bardship, not on my *poetic*, but on my *oaken* stilts; throwing my best leg with an air! and with as much hilarity in my gait and countenance, as a May frog leaping across the newly harrowed ridge, enjoying the fragrance of the refreshed earth after the long-expected shower!

. . . . . .

I can't say I am altogether at my ease when I see any where in my path, that meagre, squalid, famine-faced spectre, poverty; attended as he always is, by iron-fisted oppression, and leering contempt; but I have sturdily withstood his buffetings many a hard-laboured day already, and still my motto is—I DARE! My worst enemy is *Moiméme*. I lie so miserably open to the inroads and incursions of a mischievous, light-armed, well-mounted banditti, under the banners of imagination, whim, caprice, and passion; and the heavy-armed veteran regulars of wisdom, prudence and fore-thought, move so very, very slow, that I am almost in a state of perpetual warfare, and alas! frequent defeat. There are just two creatures that I would envy, a horse in his wild state traversing the forests of Asia, or an oyster on some of the desert shores of Europe. The one has not a wish without enjoyment, the other has neither wish nor fear.

Edinburgh, March 14, 1788.

I KNOW, my ever dear friend, that you will be pleased with the news when I tell you, I have at last taken a lease of a farm. Yesternight I completed a bargain with Mr. Miller, of Dalswinton, for the farm of Ellisland, on the banks of the Nith, between five and six miles above Dumfries. I begin at Whitsunday to build a house, drive lime, &c. and heaven be my help! for it will take a strong effort to bring my mind into the routine of business. I have discharged all the army of my former pursuits, fancies and pleasures; a motley host! and have literally and strictly retained only the ideas of a few friends, which I have incorporated into a life-guard. I trust in Dr. Johnson's observation, "Where much is attempted, something is done." Firmness both in sufferance and exertion, is a character I would wish to be thought to possess; and have always despised the whining yelp of complaint, and the cowardly, feeble resolve.

. . . . . .

Poor Miss K. is ailing a good deal this winter, and begged me to remember her to you the first time I wrote you. Surely woman, amiable woman, is often made in vain! Too delicately formed for the rougher pursuits of ambition; too noble for the dirt of avarice, and even too gentle for the rage of pleasure: formed indeed for and highly susceptible of enjoyment and rapture; but that enjoyment, alas! almost wholly at the mercy of the caprice, malevolence, stupidity, or wickedness of an animal at all times comparatively unfeeling, and often brutal.

Mauchline, 7th April, 1788.

I AM indebted to you and Miss Nimmo for letting me know Miss Kenedy. Strange! how apt we are to indulge prejudices in our judgments of one another! Even I, who pique myself on my skill in marking characters; because I am too proud of my character as a man, to be dazzled in my judgment *for* glaring wealth; and too proud of my situation as a poor man to be biassed *against* squalid poverty; I was unacquainted with Miss K.'s very uncommon worth.

I am going on a good deal progressive in *mon grand bût*, the sober science of life. I have lately made some sacrifices for which, were I *viva voce* with you to paint the situation and recount the circumstances, you would applaud me.

No date.

Now for that wayward, unfortunate thing, myself. I have broke measures with . . . and last week I wrote him a frosty, keen letter. He replied in terms of chastisement, and promised me upon his honour that I should have the account on Monday; but this is Tuesday, and yet I have not heard a word from him. God have mercy on me! a poor d-mned, incautious, duped, unfortunate fool! The sport, the miserable victim, of rebellious pride; hypochondriac imagination, agonizing sensibility, and bedlam passions!

"*I wish that I were dead, but I'm no like to die!*" I had lately "a hairbreadth 'scape in th' imminent deadly breach" of love too. Thank my stars I got off heart-whole, "waur fleyd than hurt."—*Interruption.*

I have this moment got a hint . . . . . I fear I am something like—undone—but I hope for the best. Come, stubborn pride and unshrinking resolution! accompany me through this, to me, miserable world! You must not desert me! Your friendship I think I can count on, though I should date my letters from a marching regiment. Early in life, and all my life, I reckoned on a recruiting drum as my forlorn hope. Seriously though, life at present presents me with but a melancholy path: but—my limb will soon be sound, and I shall struggle on.

Edinburgh, Sunday.

To-morrow, my dear Madam, I leave Edinburgh.

. . . . . .

I have altered all my plans of future life. A farm that I could live in, I could not find; and indeed, after the necessary support my brother and the rest of the family required, I could not venture on farming in that style suitable to my feelings. You will condemn me for the next step I have taken. I have entered into the excise. I stay in the west about three weeks, and then return to Edinburgh for six weeks instructions; afterwards, for I get employ instantly, I go *où il plait a Dieu,—et mon Roi.* I have chosen this, my dear friend, after mature deliberation. The question is not at what door of fortune's palace shall we enter in; but what doors does she open to us? I was not likely to get any thing to do. I wanted *un bût*, which is a dangerous, an unhappy situation. I got this without any hanging on, or mortifying solicitation; it is immediate bread, and though poor in comparison of the last eighteen months of my existence, 'tis luxury in comparison of all my preceding life: besides, the commissioners are some of them my acquaintances, and all of them my firm friends.

NO. LXI.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

my dear madam, *Edinburgh, Dec.* 1787.

I just now have read yours. The poetic compliments I pay cannot be misunderstood. They are neither of them so particular as to point *you* out to the world at large; and the circle of your acquaintances will allow all I have said. Besides I have complimented you chiefly, almost solely, on your mental charms. Shall I be plain with you? I will; so look to it. Personal attractions, Madam, you have much above par; wit, understanding, and worth, you possess in the first class. This is a cursed flat way of telling you these truths, but let me hear no more of your sheepish timidity. I know the world a little. I know what they will say of my poems; by second sight I suppose; for I am seldom out in my conjectures; and you may believe me, my dear Madam, I would not run any risk of hurting you by an ill-judged compliment. I wish to show to the world, the odds between a poet's friends and those of simple prosemen. More for your information *both* the pieces go in. One of them, "Where braving all the winter's harms," is already set—the tune is Neil Gow's Lamentation for Abercarney; the other is to be set to an old Highland air in Daniel Dow's "collection of ancient Scots music; the name is *Ha a Chaillich air mo Dheidh.* My treacherous memory has forgot every circumstance about *Les Incas*, only I think you mentioned them as being in C——'s possession. I shall ask him about it. I am afraid the song of "Somebody" will come too late—as I shall, for certain, leave town in a week for Ayrshire, and from that to Dumfries, but there my hopes are slender. I leave my direction in town, so any thing, wherever I am, will reach me.

I saw your's to ——— it is not too severe, nor did he take it amiss. On the contrary, like a whipt spaniel, he talks of being with you in the Christmas days. Mr. ——— has given him the invitation, and he is determined to accept of it. O selfishness! he owns in his sober moments, that from his own volatility of inclination, the circumstances in which he is situated and his knowledge of his father's disposition,—the whole affair is chimerical—yet he

will gratify an idle *penchant* at the enormous, cruel expense of perhaps ruining the peace of the very woman for whom he professes the generous passion of love! He is a gentleman in his mind and manners. *tant pis!*—He is a volatile school-boy: the heir of a man's fortune who well knows the value of two times two!

Perdition seize them and their fortunes, before they should make the amiable, the lovely ——— the derided object of their purse-proud contempt.

I am doubly happy to hear of Mrs. ———'s recovery, because I really thought all was over with her. There are days of pleasure yet awaiting her.

"As I cam in by Glenap
I met with an aged woman;
She bade me chear up my heart,
For the best o' my days was coming."

No. LXII.

TO MISS M————N.

Saturday Noon, No. 2, St. James's Sqr. New-Town, Edinburgh.

Here have I sat, my dear Madam, in the stony attitude of perplexed study for fifteen vexatious minutes, my head askew, bending over the intended card; my fixed eye insensible to the very light of day poured around; my pendulous goose-feather, loaded with ink, hanging over the future letter; all for the important purpose of writing a complimentary card to accompany your trinket.

Compliments is such a miserable Greenland expression; lies at such a chilly polar distance from the torrid zone of my constitution, that I cannot, for the very soul of me, use it to any person for whom I have the twentieth part of the esteem, every one must have for you who knows you.

As I leave town in three or four days, I can give myself the pleasure of calling for you only for a minute. Tuesday evening, sometime about seven, or after, I shall wait on you, for your farewell commands.

The hinge of your box, I put into the hands of the proper Connoisseur. The broken glass, likewise, went under review; but deliberative wisdom thought it would too much endanger the whole fabric.

I am, dear Madam,
With all sincerity of enthusiasm,
Your very humble Servant.

No. LXIII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE, Edinburgh.

Edinburgh, Sunday Morning, Nov. 23, 1787.

I beg, my dear Sir, you would not make any appointment to take us to Mr. Ainslie's to-night. On looking over my engagements, constitution, present state of my health, some little vexatious soul concerns, &c. I find I can't sup abroad to-night.

I shall be in to-day till one o'clock if you have a leisure hour.

You will think it romantic when I tell you, that I find the idea of your friendship almost necessary to my existence.—You assume a proper length of face in my bitter hours of blue-devilism, and you laugh fully up to my highest wishes at my *good things*.—I don't know, upon the whole, if you are one of the first fellows in God's world, but you are so to me. I tell you this just now in the conviction that some inequalities in my temper and manner may perhaps sometimes make you suspect that I am not so warmly as I ought to be

Your friend.

No. LXIV.

TO JOHN BALLANTINE, Esq.

While here I sit, sad and solitary, by the side of a fire in a little country inn, and drying my wet clothes, in pops a poor fellow of a sodger and tells me he is going to Ayr. By heavens! say I to myself, with a tide of good spirits which the magic of that sound, Auld Toon o' Ayr, conjured up, I will send my last song to Mr. Ballantine.—Here it is—

(*The first sketch of "Ye Banks and Braes o' Bonnie Doon."*)

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCHES.

No. LXV.

FROM THE POET TO DR. MOORE,

GIVING A SKETCH OF HIS LIFE.

SIR, *Mauchline, 2d Aug.* 1787.

For some months past I have been rambling over the country; but I am now confined with some lingering complaints, originating, as I take it, in the stomach. To divert my spirits a little in this miserable fog of *ennui*, I have taken a whim to give you a history of myself. My name has made some little noise in this coun-

try; you have done me the honour to interest yourself very warmly in my behalf; and I think a faithful account of what character of a man I am, and how I came by that character, may perhaps amuse you in an idle moment. I will give you an honest narrative; though I know it will be often at my own expense;—for I assure you, Sir, I have, like Solomon, whose character, except in the trifling affair of *wisdom*, I sometimes think I resemble,—I have, I say, like him, *turned my eyes to behold madness and folly*, and, like him too, frequently shaken hands with their intoxicating friendship. . . . After you have perused these pages, should you think them trifling and impertinent, I only beg leave to tell you, that the poor author wrote them under some twitching qualms of conscience, arising from a suspicion that he was doing what he ought not to do; a predicament he has more than once been in before.

I have not the most distant pretensions to assume that character which the pye-coated guardians of escutcheons call a Gentleman. When at Edinburgh last winter, I got acquainted in the Herald's Office; and, looking through that granary of honours, I there found almost every name in the kingdom; but for me,

"My ancient but ignoble blood
Has crept through scoundrels ever since the flood."

Gules, purpure, argent, &c. quite disowned me.

My father was of the north of Scotland, the son of a farmer, and was thrown by early misfortunes on the world at large; where, after many years wanderings and sojournings, he picked up a pretty large quantity of observation and experience, to which I am indebted for most of my little pretensions to wisdom.—I have met with few who understood *men, their manners, and their ways*, equal to him; but stubborn, ungainly integrity, and headlong, ungovernable irascibility, are disqualifying circumstances; consequently I was born a very poor man's son. For the first six or seven years of my life, my father was a gardener to a worthy gentleman of small estate in the neighbourhood of Ayr. Had he continued in that station, I must have marched off to be one of the little underlings about a farm-house; but it was his dearest wish and prayer to have it in his power to keep his children under his own eye till they could discern between good and evil; so, with the assistance of his generous master, my father ventured on a small farm on his estate. At those years I was by no means a favourite with any body. I was a good deal noted for a retentive memory, a stubborn sturdy something in my disposition, and an enthusiastic idiot piety. I say *idiot* piety, because I was then but a child. Though it cost the schoolmaster some thrashings, I made an excellent English scholar; and by the time I was ten or eleven years of age, I was a critic in substantives, verbs, and participles. In my infant and boyish days, too, I owed much to an old woman who resided in the family, remarkable for her ignorance, credulity, and superstition. She had, I suppose, the largest collection in the country of tales and songs concerning devils, ghosts, fairies, brownies, witches, warlocks, spunkies, kelpies, elf-candles, dead-lights, wraiths, apparitions, cantrips, giants, enchanted towers, dragons, and other trumpery. This cultivated the latent seeds of poetry; but had so strong an effect on my imagination, that to this hour, in my nocturnal rambles, I sometimes keep a sharp look-out in suspicious places; and though nobody can be more sceptical than I am in such matters, yet it often takes an effort of philosophy to shake of these idle terrors. The earliest composition that I recollect taking pleasure in, was *The Vision of Mirza*, and a hymn of Addison's, beginning, *How are thy Servants blest, O Lord!* I particularly remember one half-stanza which was music to my boyish ears—

"For though on dreadful whirls we hung
High on the broken wave—"

I met with these pieces in *Mason's English Collection*, one of my school-books. The two first books I ever read in private, and which gave me more pleasure than any two books I ever read since, were, *The Life of Hannibal*, and *The History of Sir William Wallace*. Hannibal gave my young ideas such a turn, that I used to strut in raptures up and down after the recruiting drum and bag-pipe, and wish myself tall enough to be a soldier; while the story of Wallace poured a Scottish prejudice into my veins, which will boil along there till the floodgates of life shut in eternal rest.

Polemical divinity about this time was putting the country half-mad; and I, ambitious of shining in conversation parties on Sundays, between sermons, at funerals, &c. used, a few years afterwards, to puzzle Calvinism with so much heat and indiscretion, that I raised a hue and cry of heresy against me, which has not ceased to this hour.

My vicinity to Ayr was of some advantage to me. My social disposition, when not checked by some modifications of spirited pride, was, like our chatechism-definition of infinitude, *without bounds or limits*. I formed several connections with other younkers who possessed superior advantages, the *youngling* actors, who were busy in the rehearsal of parts in which they were shortly to appear on the stage of life, where, alas! I was destined to drudge behind the scenes. It is not commonly at this green age that our young gentry have a just sense of the immense distance between them and their ragged play-fellows. It takes a few dashes into the world, to give the young great man that proper, decent, unnoticing disregard for the poor, insignificant, stupid devils, the mechanics and peasantry around him, who were perhaps born in the same village. My young superiors never

insulted the *clouterly* appearance of my plough-boy carcass, the two extremes of which were often exposed to all the inclemencies of all the seasons. They would give me stray volumes of books: among them, even then, I could pick up some observations; and one, whose heart I am sure not even the *Munny Begum* scenes have tainted, helped me to a little French. Parting with these my young friends and benefactors, as they occasionally went off for the East or West Indies, was often to me a sore affliction; but I was soon called to more serious evils. My father's generous master died; the farm proved a ruinous bargain; and, to clench the misfortune, we fell into the hands of a factor, who sat for the picture I have drawn of one in my *Tale of Twa Dogs*. My father was advanced in life when he married; I was the eldest of seven children; and he, worn out by early hardships, was unfit for labour. My father's spirit was soon irritated, but not easily broken. There was a freedom in his lease in two years more; and to weather these two years, we retrenched our expenses. We lived very poorly: I was a dexterous ploughman, for my age; and the next eldest to me was a brother (Gilbert) who could drive the plough very well, and help me to thrash the corn. A novel writer might perhaps have viewed these scenes with some satisfaction; but so did not I; my indignation yet boils at the recollection of the s————l factor's insolent threatening letters, which used to set us all in tears.

This kind of life—the cheerless gloom of a hermit, with the unceasing moil of a galley-slave, brought me to my sixteenth year; a little before which period I first committed the sin of Rhyme. You know our country custom of coupling a man and woman together as partners in the labours of harvest. In my fifteenth autumn my partner was a bewitching creature a year younger than myself. My scarcity of English denies me the power of doing her justice in that language; but you know the Scottish idiom—she was a *bonnie, sweet, sonsie lass.* In short, she altogether, unwittingly to herself, initiated me in that delicious passion, which, in spite of acid disappointment, gin-horse prudence, and book-worm philosophy, I hold to be the first of human joys, our dearest blessing here below! How she caught the contagion, I cannot tell: you medical people talk much of infection from breathing the same air, the touch, &c.; but I never expressly said I loved her. Indeed, I did not know myself why I liked so much to loiter behind with her, when returning in the evening from our labours; why the tones of her voice made my heart-strings thrill like an Æolian harp; and particularly why my pulse beat such a furious ratan when I looked and fingered over her little hand to pick out the cruel nettle-stings and thistles. Among her other love-inspiring qualities, she sung sweetly; and it was her favourite reel, to which I attempted giving an embodied vehicle in rhyme. I was not so presumptuous as to imagine that I could make verses like printed ones, composed by men who had Greek and Latin; but my girl sung a song, which was said to be composed by a small country laird's son, on one of his father's maids, with whom he was in love; and I saw no reason why I might not rhyme as well as he; for, excepting that he could smear sheep, and cast peats, his father living in the moor-lands, he had no more scholar-craft than myself.

Thus with me began love and poetry; which at times have been my only, and till within the last twelve months, have been my highest enjoyment. My father struggled on till he reached the freedom in his lease, when he entered on a larger farm, about ten miles farther in the country. The nature of the bargain he made was such as to throw a little ready money into his hands at the commencement of his lease; otherwise the affair would have been impracticable. For four years we lived comfortably here; but a difference commencing between him and his landlord, as to terms, after three years tossing and whirling in the vortex of litigation, my father was just saved from the horrors of a jail by a consumption, which, after two years' promises, kindly stepped in, and carried him away, to *where the wicked cease from troubling, and where the weary are at rest.*

It is during the time that we lived on this farm that my little story is most eventful. I was, at the beginning of this period, perhaps the most ungainly, awkward boy in the parish—no *solitaire* was less acquainted with the ways of the world. What I knew of ancient story was gathered from *Salmon's* and *Guthrie's* geographical grammars; and the ideas I had formed of modern manners, of literature, and criticism, I got from the *Spectator*. These, with *Pope's Works*, some plays of *Shakspeare, Tull and Dickson on Agriculture, the Pantheon, Locke's Essay on the Human Understanding, Stackhouse's History of the Bible, Justice's British Gardener's Directory, Bayle's Lectures, Allan Ramsay's Works, Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, A Select Collection of English Songs, and Hervey's Meditations*, had formed the whole of my reading. The collection of songs was my *vade mecum*. I pored over them, driving my cart, or walking to labour, song by song, verse by verse; carefully noting the true tender, or sublime, from affectation and fustian. I am convinced I owe to this practice much of my critic craft, such as it is.

In my seventeenth year, to give my manners a brush, I went to a country dancing-school.—My father had an unaccountable antipathy against these meetings; and my going was, what to this moment I repent, in opposition to his wishes. My father, as I said before, was subject to strong passions; from that instance of disobedience in me, he took a sort of dislike to me, which I believe was one cause of the dissipation which marked my succeeding years. I

say dissipation, comparatively with the strictness, and sobriety, and regularity of Presbyterian country life; for though the Will-o'-Wisp meteors of thoughtless whim were almost the sole lights of my path, yet early ingrained piety and virtue kept me for several years afterwards within the line of innocence. The great misfortune of my life was to want an aim. I had felt early some stirrings of ambition, but they were the blind gropings of Homer's Cyclops round the walls of his cave. I saw my father's situation entailed on me perpetual labour. The only two openings by which I could enter the temple of Fortune, was the gate of niggardly economy, or the path of little chicaning bargain-making. The first is so contracted an aperture, I never could squeeze myself into it;—the last I always hated—there was contamination in the very entrance! Thus abandoned of aim or view in life, with a strong appetite for sociability, as well from native hilarity, as from a pride of observation and remark; a constitutional melancholy or hypochondriasm that made me fly solitude; add to these incentives to social life, my reputation for bookish knowledge, a certain wild logical talent, and a strength of thought, something like the rudiments of good sense; and it will not seem surprising that I was generally a welcome guest where I visited, or any great wonder that, always where two or three met together, there was I among them. But, far beyond all other impulses of my heart, was *un penchant a l'adorable moitée du genre humain*. My heart was completely tinder, and was eternally lighted up by some goddess or other; and as in every other warfare in this world my fortune was various, sometimes I was received with favour, and sometimes I was mortified with a repulse. At the plough, scythe, or reap-hook, I feared no competitor, and thus I set absolute want at defiance; and as I never cared farther for my labours than while I was in actual exercise, I spent the evenings in the way after my own heart. A country lad seldom carries on a love adventure without an assisting confidant. I possessed a curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity, that recommended me as a proper second on these occasions; and I dare say, I felt as much pleasure in being in the secret of half the loves of the parish of Tarbolton, as ever did statesmen in knowing the intrigues of half the courts of Europe.—The very goose-feather in my hand seems to know instinctively the well-worn path of my imagination, the favourite theme of my song; and is with difficulty restrained from giving you a couple of paragraphs on the love adventures of my compeers, the humble inmates of the farm-house and cottage; but the grave sons of science, ambition, or avarice, baptize these things by the name of follies. To the sons and daughters of labour and poverty, they are matters of the most serious nature; to them, the ardent hope, the stolen interview, the tender farewell, are the greatest and most delicious parts of their enjoyments.

Another circumstance in my life which made some alteration in my mind and manners, was, that I spent my nineteenth summer on a smuggling coast, a good distance from home, at a noted school, to learn mensuration, surveying, dialling, &c. in which I made a pretty good progress. But I made a greater progress in the knowledge of mankind. The contraband trade was at that time very successful, and it sometimes happened to me to fall in with those who carried it on. Scenes of swaggering riot and roaring dissipation were till this time new to me; but I was no enemy to social life. Here, though I learnt to fill my glass, and to mix without fear in a drunken squabble, yet I went on with a high hand with my geometry, till the sun entered Virgo, a month which is always a carnival in my bosom, when a charming *filette*, who lived next door to the school, overset my trigonometry, and set me off at a tangent from the sphere of my studies. I, however, struggled on with my *sines*, and *co-sines*, for a few days more; but stepping into the garden one charming noon to take the sun's altitude, there I met my angel,

> "Like Proserpine, gathering flowers,
> Herself a fairer flower."——

It was in vain to think of doing any more good at school. The remaining week I staid, I did nothing but craze the faculties of my soul about her, or steal out to meet her; and the two last nights of my stay in the country, had sleep been a mortal sin, the image of this modest and innocent girl had kept me guiltless.

I returned home very considerably improved. My reading was enlarged with the very important addition of Thomson's and Shenstone's Works; I had seen human nature in a new phasis; and I engaged several of my school-fellows to keep up a literary correspondence with me. This improved me in composition. I had met with a collection of letters by the wits of Queen Anne's reign, and I pored over them most devoutly: I kept copies of any of my own letters that pleased me; and a comparison between them and the composition of most of my correspondents flattered my vanity. I carried this whim so far, that though I had not three farthings worth of business in the world, yet almost every post brought me as many letters as if I had been a broad plodding son of day-book and ledger.

My life flowed on much in the same course till my twenty-third year. *Vive l'amour, et vive la bagatelle*, were my sole principles of action. The addition of two more authors to my library gave me great pleasure; *Sterne* and *M'Kenzie*—*Tristram Shandy* and *The Man of Feeling*—were my bosom favourites. Poesy was still a darling walk for my mind; but it was only indulged in according to the humour of the hour. I had usually half a dozen or more pieces on hand; I took up one or other, as it

suited the momentary tone of the mind, and dismissed the work as it bordered on fatigue. My passions, when once lighted up, raged like so many devils, till they got vent in rhyme; and then the conning over my verses, like a spell, soothed all into quiet! None of the rhymes of those days are in print, except *Winter, a Dirge*, the eldest of my printed pieces; *The Death of Poor Mailie, John Barleycorn*, and Songs, first, second, and third. Song second was the ebullition of that passion which ended the forementioned school business.

My twenty-third year was to me an important era. Partly through whim, and partly that I wished to set about doing something in life, I joined a flax-dresser in a neighbouring town (Irvine) to learn his trade. This was an unlucky affair. My ————; and, to finish the whole, as we were giving a welcome carousal to the new year, the shop took fire, and burnt to ashes; and I was left, like a true poet, not worth a sixpence.

I was obliged to give up this scheme: the clouds of misfortune were gathering thick round my father's head; and, what was worst of all, he was visibly far gone in a consumption; and, to crown my distresses, a *belle fille*, whom I adored, and who had pledged her soul to meet me in the field of matrimony, jilted me, with peculiar circumstances of mortification. The finishing evil that brought up the rear of this infernal file, was, my constitutional melancholy being increased to such a degree, that for three months I was in a state of mind scarcely to be envied by the hopeless wretches who have got their mittimus—*Depart from me, ye cursed!*

From this adventure, I learned something of a town life; but the principal thing which gave my mind a turn, was a friendship I formed with a young fellow, a very noble character, but a hapless son of misfortune. He was the son of a simple mechanic; but a great man in the neighbourhood taking him under his patronage, gave him a genteel education, with a view of bettering his situation in life. The patron dying just as he was ready to launch out into the world, the poor fellow in despair went to sea; where, after a variety of good and ill fortune, a little before I was acquainted with him, he had been set ashore by an American privateer, on the wild coast of Connaught, stripped of every thing. I cannot quit this poor fellow's story, without adding, that he is at this time master of a large West Indiaman belonging to the Thames.

His mind was fraught with independence, magnanimity, and every manly virtue. I loved and admired him to a degree of enthusiasm, and of course strove to imitate him. In some measure, I succeeded; I had pride before, but he taught it to flow in proper channels. His knowledge of the world was vastly superior to mine, and I was all attention to learn. He was the only man I ever saw who was a greater fool than myself, where woman was the presiding star; but he spoke of illicit love with the levity of a sailor, which hitherto I had regarded with horror. Here his friendship did me a mischief; and the consequence was, that soon after I resumed the plough, I wrote the *Poet's Welcome.** My reading only increased, while in this town, by two stray volumes of *Pamela*, and one of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, which gave me some idea of novels. Rhyme, except some religious pieces that are in print, I had given up; but meeting with *Fergusson's Scottish Poems*, I strung anew my wildly-sounding lyre with emulating vigour. When my father died, his all went among the hell-hounds that prowl in the kennel of justice; but we made a shift to collect a little money in the family amongst us, with which, to keep us together, my brother and I took a neighbouring farm. My brother wanted my hair-brained imagination, as well as my social and amorous madness; but, in good sense, and every sober qualification, he was far my superior.

I entered on this farm with a full resolution, *Come, go to, I will be wise!* I read farming books; I calculated crops; I attended markets; and, in short, in spite of *the devil, and the world, and the flesh*, I believe I should have been a wise man; but the first year, from unfortunately buying bad seed, the second, from a late harvest, we lost half our crops. This overset all my wisdom, and I returned, *like the dog to his vomit, and the sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.*

I now began to be known in the neighbourhood as a maker of rhymes. The first of my poetic offspring that saw the light, was a burlesque lamentation on a quarrel between two reverend Calvinists, both of them *dramatis personæ* in my *Holy Fair*. I had a notion myself, that the piece had some merit; but to prevent the worst, I gave a copy of it to a friend who was very fond of such things, and told him that I could not guess who was the author of it, but that I thought it pretty clever. With a certain description of the clergy, as well as laity, it met with a roar of applause. *Holy Willie's Prayer* next made its appearance, and alarmed the kirk-session so much, that they held several meetings to look over their spiritual artillery, if haply any of it might be pointed against profane rhymers. Unluckily for me, my wanderings led me on another side, within point blank shot of their heaviest metal. This is the unfortunate story that gave rise to my printed poem, *The Lament*. This was a most melancholy affair, which I cannot yet bear to reflect on, and had very nearly given me one or two of the principal qualifications for a place among those who have lost the chart, and mistaken the reckoning of Rationality. I gave up my part of the farm to my brother; in truth it was only nominally mine; and made what little

* Rob the Rhymer's Welcome to his Bastard Child.

preparation was in my power for Jamaica. But, before leaving my native country for ever, I resolved to publish my poems. I weighed my productions as impartially as was in my power: I thought they had merit; and it was a delicious idea that I should be called a clever fellow, even though it should never reach my ears—a poor negro-driver,—or perhaps a victim to that inhospitable clime, and gone to the world of spirits! I can truly say, that *pauvre inconnu* as I then was, I had pretty nearly as high an idea of myself and of my works as I have at this moment, when the public has decided in their favour. It ever was my opinion, that the mistakes and blunders, both in a rational and religious point of view, of which we see thousands daily guilty, are owing to their ignorance of themselves.—To know myself, had been all along my constant study. I weighed myself alone; I balanced myself with others; I watched every means of information, to see how much ground I occupied as a man and as a poet: I studied assiduously nature's design in my formation—where the lights and shades in my character were intended. I was pretty confident my poems would meet with some applause; but, at the worst, the roar of the Atlantic would deafen the voice of censure, and the novelty of West Indian scenes make me forget neglect. I threw off six hundred copies, of which I had got subscriptions for about three hundred and fifty.—My vanity was highly gratified by the reception I met with from the public; and besides I pocketed, all expenses deducted, nearly twenty pounds. This sum came very seasonably, as I was thinking of indenting myself, for want of money to procure my passage. As soon as I was master of nine guineas, the price of wafting me to the torrid zone, I took a steerage passage in the first ship that was to sail from the Clyde; for

"Hungry ruin had me in the wind."

I had been for some days skulking from covert to covert, under all the terrors of a jail; as some ill-advised people had uncoupled the merciless pack of the law at my heels. I had taken the last farewell of my few friends; my chest was on the road to Greenock; I had composed the last song I should ever measure in Caledonia, *The gloomy night is gathering fast*, when a letter from Dr. Blacklock, to a friend of mine, overthrew all my schemes, by opening new prospects to my poetic ambition. The Doctor belonged to a set of critics, for whose applause I had not dared to hope. His opinion that I would meet with encouragement in Edinburgh for a second edition, fired me so much, that away I posted for that city, without a single acquaintance, or a single letter of introduction. The baneful star, that had so long shed its blasting influence in my zenith, for once made a revolution to the nadir; and a kind Providence placed me under the patronage of one of the noblest of men, the Earl of Glencairn. *Oublie moi, Grand Dieu, si jamais je l'oublie!*

I need relate no farther. At Edinburgh I was in a new world; I mingled among many classes of men, but all of them new to me, and I was all attention to *catch* the characters and *the manners living as they rise*. Whether I have profited, time will show.

. . . . . .

My most respectful compliments to Miss W. Her very elegant and friendly letter I cannot answer at present, as my presence is requisite in Edinburgh, and I set out to-morrow.*

No. LXVI.

FROM GILBERT BURNS.

A RUNNING COMMENTARY ON THE FOREGOING.

The farm was upwards of seventy acres† (between eighty and ninety English statute measure), the rent of which was to be forty pounds annually for the first six years, and afterwards forty-five pounds. My father endeavoured to sell his leasehold property, for the purpose of stocking this farm, but at that time was unable, and Mr. Ferguson lent him a hundred pounds for that purpose. He removed to his new situation at Whitsuntide, 1766. It was, I think, not above two years after this, that Murdoch, our tutor and friend, left this part of the country; and there being no school near us, and our little services being useful on the farm, my father undertook to teach us arithmetic in the winter evenings, by candle-light; and in this way my two eldest sisters got all the education they received. I remember a circumstance that happened at this time, which, though trifling in itself, is fresh in my memory, and may serve to illustrate the early character of my brother. Murdoch came to spend a night with us, and to take his leave when he was about to go into Carrick. He brought us, as a present and memorial of him, a small compendium of English Grammar, and the tragedy of *Titus Andronicus;* and by way of passing the evening, he began to read the play aloud. We were all attention for some time, till presently the whole party was dissolved in tears. A female in the play (I have but a confused remembrance of it) had

* There are various copies of this letter, in the author's handwriting; and one of these, evidently corrected, is in the book in which he had copied several of his letters. This has been used for the press, with some omissions, and one slight alteration suggested by Gilbert Burns.

† Letter of Gilbert Burns to Mrs. Dunlop. The name of this farm is Mount Oliphant, in Ayr parish.

her hands chopt off, and her tongue cut out, and then was insultingly desired to call for water to wash her hands. At this, in an agony of distress, we with one voice desired he would read no more. My father observed, that if we would not hear it out, it would be needless to leave the play with us. Robert replied, that if it was left he would burn it. My father was going to chide him for this ungrateful return to his tutor's kindness; but Murdoch interfered, declaring that he liked to see so much sensibility; and he left *The School for Love*, a comedy (translated, I think, from the French), in its place.

Nothing could be more retired than our general manner of living at Mount Oliphant; we rarely saw any body but the members of our own family. There were no boys of our own age, or near it, in the neighbourhood. Indeed the greatest part of the land in the vicinity was at that time possessed by shopkeepers, and people of that stamp, who had retired from business, or who kept their farm in the country, at the same time that they followed business in town. My father was for some time almost the only companion we had. He conversed familiarly on all subjects with us, as if we had been men; and was at great pains, while we accompanied him in the labours of the farm, to lead the conversation to such subjects as might tend to increase our knowledge, or confirm us in virtuous habits. He borrowed *Salmon's Geographical Grammar* for us, and endeavoured to make us acquainted with the situation and history of the different countries in the world; while, from a book-society in Ayr, he procured for us the reading of *Derham's Physico and Astro-Theology*, and *Ray's Wisdom of God in the Creation*, to give us some idea of astronomy and natural history. Robert read all these books with an avidity and industry scarcely to be equalled. My father had been a subscriber to *Stackhouse's History of the Bible*, then lately published by James Meuros in Kilmarnock: from this Robert collected a competent knowledge of ancient history; for no book was so voluminous as to slacken his industry, or so antiquitated as to damp his researches. A brother of my mother, who had lived with us some time, and had learnt some arithmetic by our winter evening's candle, went into a bookseller's shop in Ayr, to purchase *The Ready Reckoner, or Tradesman's sure Guide*, and a book to teach him to write letters. Luckily, in place of *The Complete Letter-Writer*, he got, by mistake, a small collection of letters by the most eminent writers, with a few sensible directions for attaining an easy epistolary style. This book was to Robert of the greatest consequence. It inspired him with a strong desire to excel in letter-writing, while it furnished him with models by some of the first writers in our language.

My brother was about thirteen or fourteen, when my father, regretting that we wrote so ill, sent us week about, during a summer quarter, to the parish school of Dalrymple, which, though between two and three miles distant, was the nearest to us, that we might have an opportunity of remedying this defect. About this time a bookish acquaintance of my father's procured us a reading of two volumes of Richardson's *Pamela*, which was the first novel we read, and the only part of Richardson's works my brother was acquainted with till towards the period of his commencing author. Till that time too he remained unacquainted with Fielding, with Smollet, (two volumes of *Ferdinand Count Fathom*, and two volumes of *Peregrine Pickle* excepted), with Hume, with Robertson, and almost all our authors of eminence of the later times. I recollect indeed my father borrowed a volume of English history from Mr. Hamilton of Bourtree-hill's gardener. It treated of the reign of James the First, and his unfortunate son Charles, but I do not know who was the author; all that I remember of it is something of Charles's conversation with his children. About this time Murdoch, our former teacher, after having been in different places in the country, and having taught a school some time in Dumfries, came to be the established teacher of the English language in Ayr, a circumstance of considerable consequence to us. The remembrance of my father's former friendship, and his attachment to my brother, made him do every thing in his power for our improvement. He sent us Pope's works, and some other poetry, the first that we had an opportunity of reading, excepting what is contained in *The English Collection*, and in the volume of *The Edinburgh Magazine* for 1772; excepting also *those excellent new songs* that are hawked about the country in baskets, or exposed on stalls in the streets.

The summer after we had been at Dalrymple school, my father sent Robert to Ayr, to revise his English grammar, with his former teacher. He had been there only one week, when he was obliged to return, to assist at the harvest. When the harvest was over, he went back to school, where he remained two weeks; and this completes the account of his school education, excepting one summer quarter, some time afterwards, that he attended the parish school of Kirk-Oswald (where he lived with a brother of my mother's) to learn surveying.

During the two last weeks that he was with Murdoch, he himself was engaged in learning French, and he communicated the instructions he received to my brother, who, when he returned, brought home with him a French dictionary and grammar, and the *Adventures of Telemachus* in the original. In a little while, by the assistance of these books, he had acquired such a knowledge of the language, as to read and understand any French author in prose. This was considered as a sort of prodigy, and, through the medium of Murdoch, procured him the ac-

quaintance of several lads in Ayr, who were at that time gabbling French, and the notice of some families, particularly that of Dr. Malcolm, where a knowledge of French was a recommendation.

Observing the facility with which he had acquired the French language, Mr. Robinson, the established writing-master in Ayr, and Mr. Murdoch's particular friend, having himself acquired a considerable knowledge of the Latin language by his own industry, without ever having learned it at school, advised Robert to make the same attempt, promising him every assistance in his power. Agreeably to this advice, he purchased *The Rudiments of the Latin Tongue*, but finding this study dry and uninteresting, it was quickly laid aside. He frequently returned to his *Rudiments* on any little chagrin or disappointment, particularly in his love affairs; but the Latin seldom predominated more than a day or two at a time, or a week at most. Observing himself the ridicule that would attach to this sort of conduct if it were known, he made two or three humorous stanzas on the subject, which I cannot now recollect, but they all ended,

" So I'll to my Latin again.'

Thus you see Mr. Murdoch was a principal means of my brother's improvement. Worthy man! though foreign to my present purpose, I cannot take leave of him without tracing his future history. He continued for some years a respected and useful teacher at Ayr, till one evening that he had been overtaken in liquor, he happened to speak somewhat disrespectfully of Dr. Dalrymple, the parish minister, who had not paid him that attention to which he thought himself entitled. In Ayr he might as well have spoken blasphemy. He found it proper to give up his appointment. He went to London, where he still lives, a private teacher of French. He has been a considerable time married, and keeps a shop of stationery wares.

The father of Dr. Paterson, now physician at Ayr, was, I believe, a native of Aberdeenshire, and was one of the established teachers in Ayr when my father settled in the neighbourhood. He early recognised my father as a fellow native of the north of Scotland, and a certain degree of intimacy subsisted between them during Mr. Paterson's life. After his death, his widow, who is a very genteel woman, and of great worth, delighted in doing what she thought her husband would have wished to have done, and assiduously kept up her attentions to all his acquaintance. She kept alive the intimacy with our family, by frequently inviting my father and mother to her house on Sundays, when she met them at church.

When she came to know my brother's passion for books, she kindly offered us the use of her husband's library, and from her we got the *Spectator*, *Pope's Translation of Homer*, and several other books that were of use to us.

Mount Oliphant, the farm my father possessed in the parish of Ayr, is almost the very poorest soil I know of in a state of cultivation. A stronger proof of this I cannot give, than that, notwithstanding the extraordinary rise in the value of lands in Scotland, it was, after a considerable sum laid out in improving it by the proprietor, let, a few years ago, five pounds per annum lower than the rent paid for it by my father thirty years ago. My father, in consequence of this, soon came into difficulties, which were increased by the loss of several of his cattle by accidents and disease.—To the buffetings of misfortune we could only oppose hard labour and the most rigid economy. We lived very sparingly. For several years butcher's meat was a stranger in the house, while all the members of the family exerted themselves to the utmost of their strength, and rather beyond it, in the labours of the farm. My brother, at the age of thirteen, assisted in thrashing the crop of corn, and at fifteen was the principal labourer on the farm, for we had no hired servant, male or female. The anguish of mind we felt at our tender years, under these straits and difficulties, was very great. To think of our father growing old, (for he was now above fifty), broken down with the long continued fatigues of his life, with a wife and five other children, and in a declining state of circumstances, these reflections produced in my brother's mind and mine sensations of the deepest distress. I doubt not but the hard labour and sorrow of this period of his life, was in a great measure the cause of that depression of spirits with which Robert was so often afflicted through his whole life afterwards. At this time he was almost constantly afflicted in the evenings with a dull headache, which, at a future period of his life, was exchanged for a palpitation of the heart, and a threatening of fainting and suffocation in his bed, in the night-time.

By a stipulation in my father's lease, he had a right to throw it up, if he thought proper, at the end of every sixth year. He attempted to fix himself in a better farm at the end of the first six years, but failing in that attempt, he continued where he was for six years more. He then took the farm of Lochlea, of 130 acres, at the rent of twenty shillings an acre, in the parish of Tarbolton, of Mr. ——— ———, then a merchant in Ayr, and now (1797) a merchant in Liverpool. He removed to this farm at Whitsunday, 1777, and possessed it only seven years. No writing had ever been made out of the conditions of the lease; a misunderstanding took place respecting them; the subjects in dispute were submitted to arbitration, and the decision involved my father's affairs in ruin. He lived to know of this decision, but not to see any execution in consequence of it. He died on the 13th of February, 1784.

The seven years we lived in Tarbolton parish (extending from the seventeenth to the twenty-fourth of my brother's age), were not marked

by much literary improvement; but during this time the foundation was laid of certain habits in my brother's character, which afterwards became but too prominent, and which malice and envy have taken delight to enlarge on. Though, when young, he was bashful and awkward in his intercourse with women, yet when he approached manhood, his attachment to their society became very strong, and he was constantly the victim of some fair enslaver. The symptoms of his passion were often such as nearly to equal those of the celebrated Sappho. I never indeed knew that he *fainted, sunk, and died away;* but the agitations of his mind and body exceeded any thing of the kind I ever knew in real life. He had always a particular jealousy of people who were richer than himself, or who had more consequence in life. His love, therefore, rarely settled on persons of this description. When he selected any one, out of the sovereignty of his good pleasure, to whom he should pay his particular attention, she was instantly invested with a sufficient stock of charms, out of the plentiful stores of his own imagination; and there was often a great dissimilitude between his fair captivator, as she appeared to others, and as she seemed when invested with the attributes he gave her. One generally reigned paramount in his affections; but as Yorick's affections flowed out toward Madame de L—— at the remise door, while the eternal vows of Eliza were upon him, so Robert was frequently encountering other attractions, which formed so many under plots in the drama of his love. As these connections were governed by the strictest rules of virtue and modesty (from which he never deviated till he reached his 23d year), he became anxious to be in a situation to marry. This was not likely to be soon the case while he remained a farmer, as the stocking of a farm required a sum of money he had no probability of being master of for a great while. He began, therefore, to think of trying some other line of life. He and I had for several years taken land of my father for the purpose of raising flax on our own account. In the course of selling it, Robert began to think of turning flax-dresser, both as being suitable to his grand view of settling in life, and as subservient to the flax raising. He accordingly wrought at the business of a flax-dresser in Irvine for six months, but abandoned it at that period, as neither agreeing with his health nor inclination. In Irvine he had contracted some acquaintance of a freer manner of thinking and living than he had been used to, whose society prepared him for overleaping the bounds of rigid virtue which had hitherto restrained him. Towards the end of the period under review (in his 24th year), and soon after his father's death, he was furnished with the subject of his epistle to John Rankin. During this period also he became a freemason, which was his first introduction to the life of a boon companion. Yet, notwithstanding these circumstances, and the praise he has bestowed on Scotch drink (which seems to have misled his historians), I do not recollect, during these seven years, nor till towards the end of his commencing author (when his growing celebrity occasioned his being often in company), to have ever seen him intoxicated; nor was he at all given to drinking. A stronger proof of the general sobriety of his conduct need not be required than what I am about to give. During the whole of the time we lived in the farm of Lochlea with my father, he allowed my brother and me such wages for our labour as he gave to other labourers, as a part of which, every article of our clothing manufactured in the family was regularly accounted for. When my father's affairs drew near a crisis, Robert and I took the farm of Mossgiel, consisting of 118 acres, at the rent of £90 per annum (the farm on which I live at present) from Mr. Gavin Hamilton, as an asylum for the family in case of the worst. It was stocked by the property and individual savings of the whole family, and was a joint concern among us. Every member of the family was allowed ordinary wages for the labour he performed on the farm. My brother's allowance and mine was seven pounds per annum each. And during the whole time this family concern lasted, which was four years, as well as during the preceding period at Lochlea, his expenses never in one year exceeded his slender income. As I was intrusted with the keeping of the family accounts, it is not possible that there can be any fallacy in this statement in my brother's favour. His temperance and frugality were every thing that could be wished.

The farm of Mossgiel lies very high, and mostly on a cold wet bottom. The first four years that we were on the farm were very frosty, and the spring was very late. Our crops in consequence were very unprofitable; and, notwithstanding our utmost diligence and economy, we found ourselves obliged to give up our bargain, with the loss of a considerable part of our original stock. It was during these four years that Robert formed his connection with Jean Armour, afterwards Mrs. Burns. This connection *could no longer be concealed*, about the time we came to a final determination to quit the farm. Robert durst not engage with a family in his poor unsettled state, but was anxious to shield his partner by every means in his power from the consequences of their imprudence. It was agreed therefore between them, that they should make a legal acknowledgment of an irregular and private marriage; that he should go to Jamaica, to *push his fortune;* and that she should remain with her father till it might please Providence to put the means of supporting a family in his power.

Mrs. Burns was a great favourite of her father's. The intimation of a private marriage was the first suggestion he received of her real situation. He was in the greatest distress, and fainted away. The marriage did not appear to

him to make the matter any better. A husband in Jamaica appeared to him and to his wife little better than none, and an effectual bar to any other prospects of a settlement in life that their daughter might have. They therefore expressed a wish to her, that the written papers which respected the marriage should be cancelled, and thus the marriage rendered void. In her melancholy state she felt the deepest remorse at having brought such heavy affliction on parents that loved her so tenderly, and submitted to their entreaties. Their wish was mentioned to Robert. He felt the deepest anguish of mind. He offered to stay at home and provide for his wife and family in the best manner that his daily labours could provide for them; that being the only means in his power. Even this offer they did not approve of; for, humble as Miss Armour's station was, and great though her imprudence had been, she still, in the eyes of her partial parents, might look to a better connexion than that with my friendless and unhappy brother, at that time without house or hiding-place. Robert at length consented to their wishes; but his feelings on this occasion were of the most distracting nature; and the impression of sorrow was not effaced, till by a regular marriage they were indissolubly united. In the state of mind which this separation produced, he wished to leave the country as soon as possible, and agreed with Dr. Douglas to go out to Jamaica as an assistant overseer, or, as I believe it is called, a book-keeper, on his estate. As he had not sufficient money to pay his passage, and the vessel in which Dr. Douglas was to procure a passage for him was not expected to sail for some time, Mr. Hamilton advised him to publish his poems in the meantime by subscription, as a likely way of getting a little money to provide him more liberally in necessaries for Jamaica. Agreeably to this advice, subscription bills were printed immediately, and the printing was commenced at Kilmarnock, his preparations going on at the same time for his voyage. The reception, however, which his poems met with in the world, and the friends they procured him, made him change his resolution of going to Jamaica, and he was advised to go to Edinburgh to publish a second edition. On his return, in happier circumstances, he renewed his connexion with Mrs. Burns, and rendered it permanent by a union for life.

Thus, Madam, have I endeavoured to give you a simple narrative of the leading circumstances in my brother's early life. The remaining part he spent in Edinburgh or in Dumfriesshire, and its incidents are as well known to you as to me. His genius having procured him your patronage and friendship, this gave rise to the correspondence between you, in which, I believe, his sentiments were delivered with the most respectful, but most unreserved confidence, and which only terminated with the last days of his life.

No. LXVII.

FROM MR. MURDOCH

TO

DR. MOORE,

AS TO THE POET'S EARLY TUITION.

SIR,

I WAS lately favoured with a letter from our worthy friend, the Rev. William Adair, in which he requested me to communicate to you whatever particulars I could recollect concerning Robert Burns, the Ayrshire poet. My business being at present multifarious and harassing, my attention is consequently so much divided, and I am so little in the habit of expressing my thoughts on paper, that at this distance of time I can give but a very imperfect sketch of the early part of the life of that extraordinary genius with which alone I am acquainted.

William Burnes, the father of the poet, was born in the shire of Kincardine, and bred a gardener. He had been settled in Ayrshire ten or twelve years before I knew him, and had been in the service of Mr. Crawford of Doonside. He was afterwards employed as a gardener and overseer by Provost Ferguson of Doonholm, in the parish of Alloway, which is now united with that of Ayr. In this parish, on the road side, a Scotch mile and a half from the town of Ayr, and half a mile from the bridge of Doon, William Burnes took a piece of land, consisting of about seven acres, part of which he laid out in garden ground, and part of which he kept to graze a cow, &c. still continuing in the employ of Provost Ferguson. Upon this little farm was erected a humble dwelling, of which William Burnes was the architect. It was, with the exception of a little straw, literally a tabernacle of clay. In this mean cottage, of which I myself was at times an inhabitant, I really believe there dwelt a larger portion of content than in any palace in Europe. The *Cotter's Saturday Night*, will give some idea of the temper and manners that prevailed there.

In 1765, about the middle of March, Mr. W. Burnes came to Ayr, and sent to the school where I was improving in writing under my good friend Mr. Robinson, desiring that I would come and speak to him at a certain inn, and bring my writing book with me. This was immediately complied with. Having examined my writing, he was pleased with it—(you will readily allow he was not difficult), and told me that he had received very satisfactory information of Mr. Tennant, the master of the English school, concerning my improvement in English, and in his method of teaching. In the month of May following, I was engaged by Mr. Burnes, and four of his neighbours, to teach, and accordingly began to teach the little school at Alloway, which was situated a few yards

from the argillaceous fabric above mentioned. My five employers undertook to board me by turns, and to make up a certain salary, at the end of the year, provided my quarterly payments from the different pupils did not amount to that sum.

My pupil, Robert Burns, was then between six and seven years of age; his preceptor about eighteen. Robert and his younger brother Gilbert, had been grounded a little in English before they were put under my care. They both made a rapid progress in reading, and a tolerable progress in writing. In reading, dividing words into syllables by rule, spelling without book, parsing sentences, &c., Robert and Gilbert were generally at the upper end of the class, even when ranged with boys by far their seniors. The books most commonly used in the school were, the *Spelling Book*, the *New Testament*, the *Bible*, *Mason's Collection of Prose and Verse*, and *Fisher's English Grammar*. They committed to memory the hymns, and other poems of that collection, with uncommon facility. This facility was partly owing to the method pursued by their father and me in instructing them, which was, to make them thoroughly acquainted with the meaning of every word in each sentence that was to be committed to memory. By the bye, this may be easier done, and at an earlier period, than is generally thought. As soon as they were capable of it, I taught them to turn verse into its natural prose order; sometimes to substitute synonymous expressions for poetical words, and to supply all the ellipses. These, you know, are the means of knowing that the pupil understands his author. These are excellent helps to the arrangement of words in sentences, as well as to a variety of expression.

Gilbert always appeared to me to possess a more lively imagination, and to be more of the wit, than Robert. I attempted to teach them a little church music. Here they were left far behind by all the rest of the school. Robert's ear, in particular, was remarkably dull, and his voice untunable. It was long before I could get them to distinguish one tune from another. Robert's countenance was generally grave, and expressive of a serious, contemplative, and thoughtful mind. Gilbert's face said, *Mirth, with thee I mean to live;* and certainly, if any person who knew the two boys, had been asked which of them was the most likely to court the muses, he would surely never have guessed that Robert had a propensity of that kind.

In the year 1767, Mr. Burnes quitted his mud edifice, and took possession of a farm (Mount Oliphant) of his own improving, while in the service of Provost Ferguson. This farm being at a considerable distance from the school, the boys could not attend regularly; and some changes taking place among the other supporters of the school, I left it, having continued to conduct it for nearly two years and a half.

In the year 1772, I was appointed (being one of five candidates who were examined) to teach the English school at Ayr; and in 1773, Robert Burns came to board and lodge with me, for the purpose of revising English grammar, &c. that he might be better qualified to instruct his brothers and sisters at home. He was now with me day and night, in school, at meals, and in all my walks. At the end of one week, I told him, that, as he was now pretty much master of the parts of speech, &c., I should like to teach him something of French pronunciation, that when he should meet with the name of a French town, ship, officer, or the like, in the newspapers, he might be able to pronounce it something like a French word. Robert was glad to hear this proposal, and immediately we attacked the French with great courage.

Now there was little else to be heard but the declension of nouns, the conjugation of verbs, &c. When walking together, and even at meals, I was constantly telling him the names of different objects, as they presented themselves, in French; so that he was hourly laying in a stock of words, and sometimes little phrases. In short, he took such pleasure in learning, and I in teaching, that it was difficult to say which of the two was most zealous in the business; and about the end of the second week of our study of the French, we began to read a little of the *Adventures of Telemachus*, in Fenelon's own words.

But now the plains of Mount Oliphant began to whiten, and Robert was summoned to relinquish the pleasing scenes that surrounded the grotto of Calypso, and, armed with a sickle, to seek glory by signalizing himself in the fields of Ceres—and so he did; for although but about fifteen, I was told that he performed the work of a man.

Thus was I deprived of my very apt pupil, and consequently agreeable companion, at the end of three weeks, one of which was spent entirely in the study of English, and the other two chiefly in that of French. I did not, however, lose sight of him; but was a frequent visitant at his father's house, when I had my half-holiday, and very often went accompanied with one or two persons more intelligent than myself, that good William Burnes might enjoy a mental feast. —Then the labouring oar was shifted to some other hand. The father and the son sat down with us, when we enjoyed a conversation, wherein solid reasoning, sensible remark, and a moderate seasoning of jocularity, were so nicely blended as to render it palatable to all parties. Robert had a hundred questions to ask me about the French, &c.; and the father, who had always rational information in view, had still some question to propose to my more learned friends, upon moral or natural philosophy, or some such interesting subject. Mrs. Burnes too was of the party as much as possible;

"But still the house affairs would draw her thence,
Which ever as she could with haste dispatch,
She'd come again, and, with a greedy ear,
Devour up their discourse."——

and particularly that of her husband. At all times, and in all companies, she listened to him with a more marked attention than to any body else. When under the necessity of being absent while he was speaking, she seemed to regret, as a real loss, that she had missed what the good man had said. This worthy woman, Agnes Brown, had the most thorough esteem for her husband of any woman I ever knew. I can by no means wonder that she highly esteemed him; for I myself have always considered William Burnes as by far the best of the human race that ever had the pleasure of being acquainted with—and many a worthy character I have known. I can cheerfully join with Robert in the last line of his epitaph (borrowed from Goldsmith),

"And even his failings lean'd to virtue's side."

He was an excellent husband, if I may judge from his assiduous attention to the ease and comfort of his worthy partner, and from her affectionate behaviour to him, as well as her unwearied attention to the duties of a mother.

He was a tender and affectionate father; he took pleasure in leading his children in the path of virtue; not in driving them, as some parents do, to the performance of duties to which they themselves are averse. He took care to find fault but very seldom; and therefore, when he did rebuke, he was listened to with a kind of reverential awe. A look of disapprobation was felt; a reproof was severely so; and a stripe with the *taws*, even on the skirt of the coat, gave heart-felt pain, produced a loud lamentation, and brought forth a flood of tears.

He had the art of gaining the esteem and good-will of those that were labourers under him. I think I never saw him angry but twice. the one time it was with the foreman of the band, for not reaping the field as he was desired; and the other time, it was with an old man, for using smutty inuendoes and *double entendres*. Were every foul-mouthed old man to receive a seasonable check in this way, it would be to the advantage of the rising generation. As he was at no time overbearing to inferiors, he was equally incapable of that passive, pitiful, paltry spirit, that induces some people to *keep booing and booing* in the presence of a great man. He always treated superiors with a becoming respect; but he never gave the smallest encouragement to aristocratical arrogance. But I must not pretend to give you a description of all the manly qualities, the rational and Christian virtues of the venerable William Burnes. Time would fail me. I shall only add, that he carefully practised every known duty, and avoided every thing that was criminal; or, in the apostle's words, *Herein did he exercise himself, in living a life void of offence towards God and towards men.* O for a world of men of such dispositions! We should then have no wars. I have often wished, for the good of mankind, that it were as customary to honour and perpetuate the memory of those who excel in moral rectitude, as it is to extol what are called heroic actions: then would the mausoleum of the friend of my youth overtop and surpass most of the monuments I see in Westminster Abbey.

Although I cannot do justice to the character of this worthy man, yet you will perceive, from these few particulars, what kind of person had the principal hand in the education of our poet. He spoke the English language with more propriety (both with respect to diction and pronunciation), than any man I ever knew, with no greater advantages. This had a very good effect on the boys, who began to talk, and reason like men, much sooner than their neighbours. I do not recollect any of their cotemporaries, at my little seminary, who afterwards made any great figure as literary characters, except Dr. Tenant, who was chaplain to Colonel Fullarton's regiment, and who is now in the East Indies. He is a man of genius and learning; yet affable, and free from pedantry.

Mr. Burnes, in a short time, found that he had overrated Mount Oliphant, and that he could not rear his numerous family upon it.—After being there some years, he removed to Lochlea, in the parish of Tarbolton, where, I believe, Robert wrote most of his poems.

But here, Sir, you will permit me to pause. I can tell you but little more relative to our poet. I shall, however, in my next, send you a copy of one of his letters to me, about the year 1783. I received one since, but it is mislaid. Please remember me, in the best manner, to my worthy friend Mr. Adair, when you see him or write to him.

Hart Street, Bloomsbury Square,
London, Feb. 22, 1799.

No. LXVIII.

FROM PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART TO DR. MOORE,

CONTAINING HIS SKETCHES OF THE POET.

THE first time I saw Robert Burns was on the 23d of October, 1786, when he dined at my house in Ayrshire, together with our common friend Mr. John Mackenzie, surgeon in Mauchline, to whom I am indebted for the pleasure of his acquaintance. I am enabled to mention the date particularly, by some verses which Burns wrote after he returned home, and in which the day of our meeting is recorded. My excellent and much lamented friend, the late Basil, Lord Daer, happened to arrive at Catrine the same day, and by the kindness and frankness of his manners, left an impression on the mind of the

poet, which never was effaced. The verses I allude to are among the most imperfect of his pieces; but a few stanzas may perhaps be an object of curiosity to you, both on account of the character to which they relate, and of the light which they throw on the situation and feelings of the writer, before his name was known to the public.*

I cannot positively say, at this distance of time, whether, at the period of our first acquaintance, the Kilmarnock edition of his poems had been just published, or was yet in the press. I suspect that the latter was the case, as I have still in my possession copies in his own handwriting, of some of his favourite performances; particularly of his verses "on turning up a Mouse with his plough;"—"on the Mountain Daisy;" and "the Lament." On my return to Edinburgh, I showed the volume, and mentioned what I knew of the author's history, to several of my friends, and among others, to Mr. Henry Mackenzie, who first recommended him to public notice in the 97th number of *The Lounger*.

At this time Burns's prospects in life were so extremely gloomy, that he had seriously formed a plan of going out to Jamaica in a very humble situation, not, however, without lamenting, that his want of patronage should force him to think of a project so repugnant to his feelings, when his ambition aimed at no higher an object than the station of an exciseman or gauger in his own country.

His manners were then, as they continued ever afterwards, simple, manly, and independent; strongly expressive of conscious genius and worth; but without any thing that indicated forwardness, arrogance, or vanity. He took his share in conversation, but not more than belonged to him; and listened with apparent attention and deference, on subjects where his want of education deprived him of the means of information. If there had been a little more of gentleness and accommodation in his temper, he would, I think, have been still more interesting; but he had been accustomed to give law in the circle of his ordinary acquaintance; and his dread of any thing approaching to meanness or servility, rendered his manner somewhat decided and hard. Nothing, perhaps, was more remarkable among his various attainments, than the fluency, and precision, and originality of his language, when he spoke in company; more particularly as he aimed at purity in his turn of expression, and avoided more successfully than most Scotchmen, the peculiarities of Scottish phraseology.

He came to Edinburgh early in the winter following, and remained there for several months. By whose advice he took this step, I am unable to say. Perhaps it was suggested only by his own curiosity to see a little more of the world; but, I confess, I dreaded the consequences from the first, and always wished that his pursuits and habits should continue the same as in the former part of life; with the addition of, what I considered as then completely within his reach, a good farm on moderate terms, in a part of the country agreeable to his taste.

The attentions he received during his stay in town from all ranks and descriptions of persons, were such as would have turned any head but his own. I cannot say that I could perceive any unfavourable effect which they left on his mind. He retained the same simplicity of manners and appearance which had struck me so forcibly when I first saw him in the country; nor did he seem to feel any additional self-importance from the number and rank of his new acquaintance. His dress was perfectly suited to his station, plain and unpretending, with a sufficient attention to neatness. If I recollect right he always wore boots; and, when on more than usual ceremony, buck-skin breeches.

The variety of his engagements, while in Edinburgh, prevented me from seeing him so often as I could have wished. In the course of the spring he called on me once or twice, at my request, early in the morning, and walked with me to Braid-Hills, in the neighbourhood of the town, when he charmed me still more by his private conversation, than he had ever done in company. He was passionately fond of the beauties of nature; and I recollect once he told me, when I was admiring a distant prospect in one of our morning walks, that the sight of so many smoking cottages gave a pleasure to his mind, which none could understand who had not witnessed, like himself, the happiness and the worth which they contained.

In his political principles he was then a Jacobite; which was perhaps owing partly to this, that his father was originally from the estate of Lord Mareschall. Indeed he did not appear to have thought much on such subjects, nor very consistently. He had a very strong sense of religion, and expressed deep regret at the levity with which he had heard it treated occasionally in some convivial meetings which he frequented. I speak of him as he was in the winter of 1786-7; for afterwards we met but seldom, and our conversations turned chiefly on his literary projects, or his private affairs.

I do not recollect whether it appears or not from any of your letters to me, that you had ever seen Burns. If you have, it is superfluous for me add, that the idea which his conversation conveyed of the powers of his mind, exceeded, if possible, that which is suggested by his writings. Among the poets whom I have happened to know, I have been struck, in more than one instance, with the unaccountable disparity between their general talents, and the occasional inspirations of their more favoured moments. But all the faculties of Burns's mind were, as far as I could judge, equally vigorous; and his predilection for poetry was rather the result of his own enthusiastic and impassioned

* See Songs, p. 210.

temper, than of a genius exclusively adapted to that species of composition. From his conversation I should have pronounced him to be fitted to excel in whatever walk of ambition he had chosen to exert his abilities.

Among the subjects on which he was accustomed to dwell, the characters of the individuals with whom he happened to meet, was plainly a favourite one. The remarks he made on them were always shrewd and pointed, though frequently inclining too much to sarcasm. His praise of those he loved was sometimes indiscriminate and extravagant; but this, I suspect, proceeded rather from the caprice and humour of the moment, than from the effects of attachment in blinding his judgment. His wit was ready, and always impressed with the marks of a vigorous understanding; but, to my taste, not often pleasing or happy. His attempts at epigram, in his printed works, are the only performances, perhaps, that he has produced, totally unworthy of his genius.

In summer, 1787, I passed some weeks in Ayrshire, and saw Burns occasionally. I think that he made a pretty long excursion that season to the Highlands, and that he also visited what Beattie calls the Arcadian ground of Scotland, upon the banks of the Teviot and the Tweed.

I should have mentioned before, that notwithstanding various reports I heard during the preceding winter, of Burns's predilection for convivial, and not very select society, I should have concluded in favour of his habits of sobriety, from all of him that ever fell under my own observation. He told me indeed himself, that the weakness of his stomach was such as to deprive him entirely of any merit in his temperance. I was however somewhat alarmed about the effect of his now comparatively sedentary and luxurious life, when he confessed to me, the first night he spent in my house after his winter's campaign in town, that he had been much disturbed when in bed, by a palpitation at his heart, which, he said, was a complaint to which he had of late become subject.

In the course of the same season, I was led by curiosity to attend for an hour or two a Mason-Lodge in Mauchline, where Burns presided. He had occasion to make some short unpremeditated compliments to different individuals from whom he had no reason to expect a visit, and every thing he said was happily conceived, and forcibly as well as fluently expressed. If I am not mistaken, he told me, that in that village, before going to Edinburgh, he had belonged to a small club of such of the inhabitants as had a taste for books, when they used to converse and debate on any interesting questions that occurred to them in the course of their reading. His manner of speaking in public had evidently the marks of some practice in extempore elocution.

I must not omit to mention, what I have always considered as characteristical in a high degree of true genius, the extreme facility and good nature of his taste, in judging of the compositions of others, where there was any real ground for praise. I repeated to him many passages of English poetry with which he was unacquainted, and have more than once witnessed the tears of admiration and rapture with which he heard them. The collection of songs by Dr. Aiken, which I first put into his hands, he read with unmixed delight, notwithstanding his former efforts in that very difficult species of writing; and I have little doubt that it had some effect in polishing his subsequent compositions.

In judging of prose, I do not think his taste was equally sound. I once read to him a passage or two in Franklin's Works, which I thought very happily executed, upon the model of Addison; but he did not appear to relish, or to perceive the beauty which they derived from their exquisite simplicity, and spoke of them with indifference, when compared with the point, and antithesis, and quaintness of *Junius*. The influence of this taste is very perceptible in his own prose compositions, although their great and various excellencies render some of them scarcely less objects of wonder than his poetical performances. The late Dr. Robertson used to say, that, considering his education, the former seemed to him the more extraordinary of the two.

His memory was uncommonly retentive, at least for poetry, of which he recited to me frequently long compositions with the most minute accuracy. They were chiefly ballads, and other pieces in our Scottish dialect; great part of them (he told me) he had learned in his childhood, from his mother, who delighted in such recitations, and whose poetical taste, rude as it probably was, gave, it is presumable, the first direction to her son's genius.

Of the more polished verses which accidentally fell into his hands in his early years, he mentioned particularly the recommendatory poems, by different authors, prefixed to *Hervey's Meditations;* a book which has always had a very wide circulation among such of the country people of Scotland, as affect to unite some degree of taste with their religious studies. And these poems (although they are certainly below mediocrity) he continued to read with a degree of rapture beyond expression. He took notice of this fact himself, as a proof how much the taste is liable to be influenced by accidental circumstances.

His father appeared to me, from the account he gave of him, to have been a respectable and worthy character, possessed of a mind superior to what might have been expected from his station in life. He ascribed much of his own principles and feelings to the early impressions he had received from his instructions and example. I recollect that he once applied to *him* (and he added, that the passage was a literal statement of fact,) the two last lines of the fol-

lowing passage in the *Minstrel;* the whole of which he repeated with great enthusiasm:

"Shall I be left forgotten in the dust,
When fate, relenting, lets the flower revive;
Shall nature's voice, to man alone unjust,
Bid him, though doom'd to perish, hope to live?"
Is it for this fair Virtue oft must strive
With disappointment, penury, and pain?
No! Heaven's immortal spring shall yet arrive;
And man's majestic beauty bloom again,
Bright through th' eternal year of love's triumphant reign.

This truth sublime, his simple sire had taught:
In sooth, 'twas almost all the shepherd knew.

With respect to Burns's early education, I cannot say any thing with certainty. He always spoke with respect and gratitude of the school-master who had taught him to read English; and who, finding in his scholar a more than ordinary ardour for knowledge, had been at pains to instruct him in the grammatical principles of the language. He began the study of Latin, but dropped it before he had finished the verbs. I have sometimes heard him quote a few Latin words, such as *omnia vincit amor*, &c., but they seemed to be such as he had caught from conversation, and which he repeated by *rote*. I think he had a project, after he came to Edinburgh, of prosecuting the study under his intimate friend, the late Mr. Nicoll, one of the masters of the grammar-school here; but I do not know that he ever proceeded so far as to make the attempt.

He certainly possessed a smattering of French; and, if he had an affectation in any thing, it was in introducing occasionally a word or phrase from that language. It is possible that his knowledge in this respect might be more extensive than I suppose it to be; but this you can learn from his more intimate acquaintance. It would be worth while to inquire, whether he was able to read the French authors with such facility as to receive from them any improvement to his taste. For my own part, I doubt it much—nor would I believe it, but on very strong and pointed evidence.

If my memory does not fail me, he was well instructed in arithmetic, and knew something of practical geometry, particularly of surveying. —All his other attainments were entirely his own.

The last time I saw him was during the winter, 1788-89; when he passed an evening with me at Drumsheugh, in the neighbourhood of Edinburgh, where I was then living. My friend Mr. Alison was the only other person in company. I never saw him more agreeable or interesting. A present which Mr. Alison sent him afterwards of his *Essays on Taste*, drew from Burns a letter of acknowledgment, which I remember to have read with some degree of surprise at the distinct conception he appeared from it to have formed, of the general principles of the doctrine of *association*. When I saw Mr. Alison in Shropshire last autumn, I forgot to inquire if the letter be still in existence. If it is, you may easily procure it, by means of our friend Mr. Houlbrooke.

. . . . . .

No. LXIX.

FROM GILBERT BURNS

TO

DR. CURRIE,

GIVING THE HISTORY OF THE ORIGIN OF THE PRINCIPAL POEMS.

It may gratify curiosity to know some particulars of the history of the preceding Poems, on which the celebrity of our Bard has been hitherto founded; and with this view the following extract is made from a letter of Gilbert Burns, the brother of our Poet, and his friend and confidant from his earliest years.

DEAR SIR, *Mossgiel, 2d April,* 1798.

Your letter of the 14th of March I received in due course, but, from the hurry of the season, have been hitherto hindered from answering it. I will now try to give you what satisfaction I can in regard to the particulars you mention. I cannot pretend to be very accurate in respect to the dates of the poems, but none of them, except *Winter*, a *Dirge*, (which was a juvenile production), *the Death and Dying Words of poor Mailie*, and some of the songs, were composed before the year 1784. The circumstances of the poor sheep were pretty much as he has described them. He had, partly by way of frolic, bought a ewe and two lambs from a neighbour, and she was tethered in a field adjoining the house at Lochlie. He and I were going out with our teams, and our two younger brothers to drive for us, at mid-day, when Hugh Wilson, a curious looking awkward boy, clad in plaiding, came to us with much anxiety in his face, with the information that the ewe had entangled herself in the tether, and was lying in the ditch. Robert was much tickled with *Hughoc's* appearance and postures on the occasion. Poor Mailie was set to rights, and when we returned from the plough in the evening, he repeated to me her *Death and Dying Words* pretty much in the way they now stand.

Among the earliest of his poems was the *Epistle to Davie*. Robert often composed without any regular plan. When any thing made a strong impression on his mind, so as to rouse it

to poetic exertion, he would give way to the impulse, and embody the thought in rhyme. If he hit on two or three stanzas to please him, he would then think of proper introductory, connecting, and concluding stanzas; hence the middle of a poem was often first produced. It was, I think, in summer 1784, when in the interval of harder labour, he and I were weeding in the garden (kailyard) that he repeated to me the principal part of this epistle. I believe the first idea of Robert's becoming an author was started on this occasion. I was much pleased with the epistle, and said to him I was of opinion it would bear being printed, and that it would be well received by people of taste; that I thought it at least equal, if not superior, to many of Allan Ramsay's epistles, and that the merit of these, and much other Scotch poetry, seemed to consist principally in the knack of the expression—but here, there was a strain of interesting sentiment, and the Scotticism of the language scarcely seemed affected, but appeared to be the natural language of the poet; that, besides, there was certainly some novelty in a poet pointing out the consolations that were in store for him when he should go a-begging. Robert seemed very well pleased with my criticism; and we talked of sending it to some magazine, but as this plan afforded no opportunity of knowing how it would take, the idea was dropped.

It was, I think, in the winter following, as we were going together with carts for coal to the family fire (and I could yet point out the particular spot), that the author first repeated to me the *Address to the Deil.* The curious idea of such an address was suggested to him, by running over in his mind the many ludicrous accounts and representations we have, from various quarters, of this august personage. *Death and Dr. Hornbook,* though not published in the Kilmarnock edition, was produced early in the year 1785. The schoolmaster of Tarbolton parish, to eke up the scanty subsistence allowed to that useful class of men, had set up a shop of grocery goods. Having accidentally fallen in with some medical books, and become most hobby-horsically attached to the study of medicine, he had added the sale of a few medicines to his little trade. He had got a shop-bill printed, at the bottom of which, overlooking his own incapacity, he had advertised, that "Advice would be given in common disorders at the shop, gratis." Robert was at a mason-meeting, in Tarbolton, when the "Dominie" unfortunately made too ostentatious a display of his medical skill. As he parted in the evening from this mixture of pedantry and physic, at the place where he describes his meeting with Death, one of those floating ideas of apparition, he mentions in his letter to Dr. Moore, crossed his mind; this set him to work for the rest of the way home. These circumstances he related when he repeated the verses to me next afternoon, as I was holding the plough, and he was letting the water off the field beside me The *Epistle to John Lapraik* was produced exactly on the occasion described by the author. He says in that poem, *On fasten e'en he had a rockin'.* I believe he has omitted the word *rocking* in the glossary. It is a term derived from those primitive times, when the country-women employed their spare hours in spinning on the rock, or distaff. This simple instrument is a very portable one, and well fitted to the social inclination of meeting in a neighbour's house; hence the phrase of *going a-rocking* or *with the rock.* As the connection the phrase had with the implement was forgotten when the rock gave way to the spinning-wheel, the phrase came to be used by both sexes on social occasions, and men talk of going with their rocks as well as women.

It was at one of these *rockings* at our house, when we had twelve or fifteen young people with their *rocks,* that Lapraik's song, beginning—"When I upon thy bosom lean," was sung, and we are informed who was the author. Upon this Robert wrote his first epistle to Lapraik; and his second in reply to his answer. The verses to the *Mouse* and *Mountain-Daisy* were composed on the occasions mentioned, and while the author was holding the plough; I could point out the particular spot where each was composed. Holding the plough was a favourite situation with Robert for poetic compositions, and some of his best verses were produced while he was at that exercise. Several of the poems were produced for the purpose of bringing forward some favourite sentiment of the author. He used to remark to me, that he could not well conceive a more mortifying picture of human life than a man seeking work. In casting about in his mind how this sentiment might be brought forward, the elegy *Man was made to Mourn,* was composed. Robert had frequently remarked to me, that he thought there was something peculiarly venerable in the phrase, "Let us worship God," used by a decent sober head of a family introducing family worship. To this sentiment of the author the world is indebted for the *Cotter's Saturday Night.* The hint of the plan, and the title of the poem, were taken from Fergusson's *Farmer's Ingle.* When Robert had not some pleasure in view in which I was not thought fit to participate, we used frequently to walk together when the weather was favourable, on the Sunday afternoons, (those precious breathing-times to the labouring part of the community), and enjoyed such Sundays as would make one regret to see their number abridged. It was in one of these walks that I first had the pleasure of hearing the author repeat the *Cotter's Saturday Night.* I do not recollect to have read or heard any thing by which I was more highly *electrified.* The fifth and sixth stanzas, and the eighteenth, thrilled with peculiar ecstasy through my soul. I mention this to you, that you may see what hit the taste of unlettered criticism. I should

be glad to know, if the enlightened mind and refined taste of Mr. Roscoe, who has borne such honourable testimony to this poem, agrees with me in the selection. Fergusson, in his *Hallow Fair* of Edinburgh, I believe, likewise furnished a hint of the title and plan of the *Holy Fair*. The farcical scene the poet there describes was often a favourite field of his observation, and the most of the incidents he mentions had actually passed before his eyes. It is scarcely necessary to mention, that the *Lament* was composed on that unfortunate passage in his matrimonial history, which I have mentioned in my letter to Mrs. Dunlop, after the first distraction of his feelings had a little subsided. *The Tale of Twa Dogs* was composed after the resolution of publishing was nearly taken. Robert had had a dog, which he called *Luath*, that was a great favourite. The dog had been killed by the wanton cruelty of some person the night before my father's death. Robert said to me, that he should like to confer such immortality as he could bestow upon his old friend *Luath*, and that he had a great mind to introduce something into the book under the title of *Stanzas to the Memory of a quadruped Friend;* but this plan was given up for the *Tale* as it now stands. *Cæsar* was merely the creature of the poet's imagination, created for the purpose of holding chat with his favourite *Luath*. The first time Robert heard the spinnet played upon, was at the house of Dr. Lawrie, then minisier of the parish of Loudon, now in Glasgow, having given up the parish in favour of his son. Dr. Lawrie has several daughters; one of them played; the father and mother led down the dance; the rest of the sisters, the brother, the poet, and the other guest, mixed in it. It was a delightful family scene for our poet, then lately introduced to the world. His mind was roused to a poetic enthusiasm, and the stanzas, p. 36, were left in the room where he slept. It was to Dr. Lawrie that Dr. Blacklock's letter was addressed, which my brother, in his letter to Dr. Moore, mentions as the reason of his going to Edinburgh.

When my father *feued* his little property near Alloway Kirk, the wall of the church-yard had gone to ruin, and cattle had free liberty of pasturing in it. My father, with two or three other neighbours, joined in an application to the town council of Ayr, who were superiors of the adjoining land, for liberty to rebuild it, and raised by subscription a sum for enclosing this ancient cemetery with a wall; hence he came to consider it as his burial-place, and we learned that reverence for it, people generally have for the burial-place of their ancestors. My brother was living in Ellisland, when Captain Grose, on his peregrinations through Scotland, staid some time at Carse-house, in the neighbourhood, with Captain Robert Riddel, of Glen-Riddell, a particular friend of my brother's. The Antiquarian and the Poet were "Unco pack and thick thegither." Robert requested of Captain Grose, when he should come to Ayrshire, that he would make a drawing of Alloway Kirk, as it was the burial-place of his father, and where he himself had a sort of claim to lay down his bones when they should be no longer serviceable to him; and added, by way of encouragement, that it was the scene of many a good story of witches and apparitions, of which he knew the Captain was very fond. The Captain agreed to the request, provided the Poet would furnish a witch-story, to be printed along with it. *Tam o' Shanter* was produced on this occasion, and was first published in *Grose's Antiquities of Scotland.*

This poem is founded on a traditional story. The leading circumstances of a man riding home very late from Ayr, in a stormy night, his seeing a light in Alloway Kirk, his having the curiosity to look in, his seeing a dance of witches, with the devil playing on the bag-pipe to them, the scanty covering of one of the witches, which made him so far forget himself as to cry—"Weel loupen, short sark!"—with the melancholy catastrophe of the piece; is all a true story, that can be well attested by many respectable old people in that neighbourhood.

I do not at present recollect any circumstances respectig the other poems, that could be at all interesting; even some of those I have mentioned, I am afraid, may appear trifling enough, but you will only make use of what appears to you of consequence.

The following Poems in the first Edinburgh edition, were not in that published in Kilmarnock. *Death and Dr. Hornbook; The Brigs of Ayr; The Calf;* (the poet had been with Mr. Gavin Hamilton in the morning, who said jocularly to him when he was going to church, in allusion to the injunction of some parents to their children, that he must be sure to bring him a note of the sermon at mid-day; this address to the Reverend Gentleman on his text was accordingly produced). *The Ordination; The Address to the Unco Guid; Tam Samson's Elegy; A Winter Night; Stanzas on the same occasion as the preceding prayer; Verses left at a Reverend Friend's house; The first Psalm; Prayer under the pressure of violent anguish; The first six verses of the nineteenth Psalm; Verses to Miss Logan, with Beattie's Poems; To a Haggis; Address to Edinburgh; John Barleycorn; When Guilford Guid; Behind yon hills where Stinchar flows; Green grow the Rashes; Again rejoicing Nature sees; The gloomy Night; No Churchman am I.*

No. LXX.

FROM GILBERT BURNS TO DR. CURRIE.

Dinning, Dumfriesshire, 24th Oct. 1800.

DEAR SIR,

YOURS of the 17th instant came to my hand

yesterday, and I sit down this afternoon to write you in return; but when I shall be able to finish all I wish to say to you, I cannot tell. I am sorry your conviction is not complete respecting *feck*. There is no doubt that if you take two English words which appear synonymous to *mony feck*, and judge by the rules of English construction, it will appear a barbarism. I believe if you take this mode of translating from any language, the effect will frequently be the same. But if you take the expression *mony feck* to have, as I have stated it, the same meaning with the English expression *very many*, (and such license every translator must be allowed, especially when he translates from a simple dialect which has never been subjected to rule, and where the precise meaning of words is of consequence not minutely attended to), it will be well enough. One thing I am certain of, that ours is the sense universally understood in this country; and I believe no Scotsman who has lived contented at home, pleased with the simple manners, the simple melodies, and the simple dialect of his native country, unvitiated by foreign intercourse, "whose soul proud science never taught to stray," ever discovered barbarism in the song of Etrick Banks.

The story you have heard of the gable of my father's house falling down, is simply as follows:—When my father built his "clay biggin," he put in two stone-jambs, as they are called, and a lintel, carrying up a chimney in his clay-gable. The consequence was, that as the gable subsided, the jambs, remaining firm, threw it off its centre; and, one very stormy morning, when my brother was nine or ten days old, a little before day-light, a part of the gable fell out, and the rest appeared so shattered, that my mother, with the young poet, had to be carried through the storm to a neighbour's house, where they remained a week till their own dwelling was adjusted. That you may not think too meanly of this house, or of my father's taste in building, by supposing the poet's description in the Vision (which is entirely a fancy picture) applicable to it, allow me to take notice to you, that the house consisted of a kitchen in one end, and a room in the other, with a fire-place and chimney; that my father had constructed a concealed bed in the kitchen, with a small closet at the end, of the same materials with the house, and, when altogether cast over, outside and in, with lime, it had a neat, comfortable appearance, such as no family of the same rank, in the present improved style of living, would think themselves ill-lodged in. I wish likewise to take notice in passing, that although the "Cotter," in the Saturday Night, is an exact copy of my father in his manners, his family devotion, and exhortations, yet the other parts of the description do not apply to our family. None of us were ever "at service out amang the neebors roun." Instead of our depositing our "sair won penny-fee" with our parents, my father laboured hard, and lived with the most rigid economy, that he might be able to keep his children at home, thereby having an opportunity of watching the progress of our young minds, and forming in them early habits of piety and virtue; and from this motive alone did he engage in farming, the source of all his difficulties and distresses.

When I threatened you in my last with a long letter on the subject of the books I recommended to the Mauchline club, and the effects of refinement of taste on the labouring classes of men, I meant merely that I wished to write you on that subject, with the view that, in some future communication to the public, you might take up the subject more at large, that, by means of your happy manner of writing, the attention of people of power and influence might be fixed on it. I had little expectation, however, that I should overcome my indolence, and the difficulty of arranging my thoughts so far as to put my threat in execution, till some time ago, before I had finished my harvest, having a call from Mr. Ewart, with a message from you, pressing me to the performance of this task, I thought myself no longer at liberty to decline it, and resolved to set about it with my first leisure. I will now therefore endeavour to lay before you what has occurred to my mind on a subject where people capable of observation, and of placing their remarks in a proper point of view, have seldom an opportunity of making their remarks on real life. In doing this I may perhaps be led sometimes to write more in the manner of a person communicating information to you which you did not know before, and at other times more in the style of egotism than I would choose to do to any person in whose candour, and even personal good-will, I had less confidence.

There are two several lines of study that open to every man as he enters life: the one, the general science of life, of duty, and of happiness; the other, the particular arts of his employment or situation in society, and the several branches of knowledge therewith connected. This last is certainly indispensable, as nothing can be more disgraceful than ignorance in the way of one's own profession; and whatever a man's speculative knowledge may be, if he is ill informed there, he can neither be a useful nor a respectable member of society. It is nevertheless true, that "the proper study of mankind is man;" to consider what duties are encumbent on him as a rational creature, and a member of society; how he may increase or secure his happiness; and how he may prevent or soften the many miseries incident to human life. I think the pursuit of happiness is too frequently confined to the endeavour after the acquisition of wealth. I do not wish to be considered as an idle declaimer against riches, which, after all that can be said against them, will still be considered by men of common sense as objects of importance; and poverty will be felt as a sore evil, after all the fine things that can be said of its advan

tages; on the contrary I am of opinion, that a great proportion of the miseries of life arise from the want of economy, and a prudent attention to money, or the ill-directed or intemperate pursuit of it. But however valuable riches may be as the means of comfort, independence, and the pleasure of doing good to others, yet I am of opinion, that they may be, and frequently are, purchased at too great a cost, and that sacrifices are made in the pursuit which the acquisition cannot compensate. I remember hearing my worthy teacher, Mr. Murdoch, relate an anecdote to my father, which I think sets this matter in a strong light, and perhaps was the origin, or at least tended to promote this way of thinking in me. When Mr. Murdoch left Alloway, he went to teach and reside in the family of an opulent farmer who had a number of sons. A neighbour coming on a visit, in the course of conversation asked the father how he meant to dispose of his sons. The father replied, that he had not determined. The visitor said, that were he in his place he would give them all good education and send them abroad, without (perhaps) having a precise idea where. The father objected, that many young men lost their health in foreign countries, and many their lives. True, replied the visitor, but as you have a number of sons, it will be strange if some one of them does not live and make a fortune.

Let any person who has the feelings of a father comment on this story: but though few will avow, even to themselves, that such views govern their conduct, yet do we not daily see people shipping off their sons, (and who would do so by their daughters also, if there were any demand for them), that they may be rich or perish?

The education of the lower classes is seldom considered in any other point of view than as the means of raising them from that station to which they were born, and of making a fortune. I am ignorant of the mysteries of the art of acquiring a fortune without any thing to begin with, and cannot calculate, with any degree of exactness, the difficulties to be surmounted, the mortifications to be suffered, and the degradation of character to be submitted to, in lending one's self to be the minister of other people's vices, or in the practice of rapine, fraud, oppression, or dissimulation, in the progress; but even when the wished for end is attained, it may be questioned whether happiness be much increased by the change. When I have seen a fortunate adventurer of the lower ranks of life returned from the East or West Indies with all the hauteur of a vulgar mind accustomed to be served by slaves, assuming a character, which, from the early habits of life, he is ill fitted to support, displaying magnificence which raises the envy of some, and the contempt of others; claiming an equality with the great, which they are unwilling to allow; inly pining at the precedence of the hereditary gentry; maddened by the polished insolence of some of the unworthy part of them; seeking pleasure in the society of men who can condescend to flatter him, and listen to his absurdity for the sake of a good dinner and good wine; I cannot avoid concluding, that his brother, or companion, who, by a diligent application to the labours of agriculture, or some useful mechanic employment, and the careful husbanding of his gains, has acquired a competence in his station, is a much happier, and, in the eye of a person who can take an enlarged view of mankind, a much more respectable man.

But the votaries of wealth may be considered as a great number of candidates striving for a few prizes, and whatever addition the successful may make to their pleasure or happiness, the disappointed will always have more to suffer, I am afraid, than those who abide contented in the station to which they were born. I wish, therefore, the education of the lower classes to be promoted and directed to their improvement as men, as the means of increasing their virtue, and opening to them new and dignified sources of pleasure and happiness. I have heard some people object to the education of the lower classes of men, as rendering them less useful, by abstracting them from their proper business; others, as tending to make them saucy to their superiors, impatient of their condition, and turbulent subjects; while you, with more humanity, have your fears alarmed, lest the delicacy of mind, induced by that sort of education and reading I recommend, should render the evils of their situation insupportable to them. I wish to examine the validity of each of these objections, beginning with the one you have mentioned.

I do not mean to controvert your criticism of my favourite books, the Mirror and Lounger, although I understand there are people who think themselves judges, who do not agree with you. The acquisition of knowledge, except what is connected with human life and conduct, or the particular business of his employment, does not appear to me to be the fittest pursuit for a peasant. I would say with the poet,

> "How empty learning, and how vain is art,
> Save where it guides the life, or mends the heart!"

There seems to be a considerable latitude in the use of the word taste. I understand it to be the perception and relish of beauty, order, or any other thing, the contemplation of which gives pleasure and delight to the mind. I suppose it is in this sense you wish it to be understood. If I am right, the taste which these books are calculated to cultivate, (beside the taste for fine writing, which many of the papers tend to improve and to gratify), is what is proper, consistent, and becoming in human character and conduct, as almost every paper relates to these subjects.

I am sorry I have not these books by me,

that I might point out some instances. I remember two; one, the beautiful story of La Roche, where, beside the pleasure one derives from a beautiful simple story told in M'Kenzie's happiest manner, the mind is led to taste, with heartfelt rapture, the consolation to be derived in deep affliction, from habitual devotion and trust in Almighty God. The other, the story of General W——, where the reader is led to have a high relish for that firmness of mind which disregards appearances, the common forms and vanities of life, for the sake of doing justice in a case which was out of the reach of human laws.

Allow me then to remark, that if the morality of these books is subordinate to the cultivation of taste; that taste, that refinement of mind and delicacy of sentiment which they are intended to give, are the strongest guard and surest foundation of morality and virtue. Other moralists guard, as it were, the overt act; these papers, by exalting duty into sentiment, are calculated to make every deviation from rectitude and propriety of conduct, painful to the mind,

> " Whose temper'd powers,
> Refine at length, and every passion wears
> A chaster, milder, more attractive mien."

I readily grant you that the refinement of mind which I contend for, increases our sensibility to the evils of life; but what station of life is without its evils! There seems to be no such thing as perfect happiness in this world, and we must balance the pleasure and the pain which we derive from taste, before we can properly appreciate it in the case before us. I apprehend that on a minute examination it will appear, that the evils peculiar to the lower ranks of life, derive their power to wound us, more from the suggestions of false pride, and the " contagion of luxury weak and vile," than the refinement of our taste. It was a favourite remark of my brother's, that there was no part of the constitution of our nature, to which we were more indebted, than that by which "*custom makes things familiar and easy,*" (a copy Mr. Murdoch used to set us to write), and there is little labour which custom will not make easy to a man in health, if he is not ashamed of his employment, or does not begin to compare his situation with those he may see going about at their ease.

But the man of enlarged mind feels the respect due to him as a man; he has learned that no employment is dishonourable in itself; that while he performs aright the duties of that station in which God has placed him, he is as great as a king in the eyes of Him whom he is principally desirous to please; for the man of taste, who is constantly obliged to labour, must of necessity be religious. If you teach him only to reason, you may make him an atheist, a demagogue, or any vile thing; but if you teach him to feel, his feelings can only find their proper and natural relief in devotion and religious resignation. He knows that those people who are to appearance at ease, are not without their share of evils, and that even toil itself is not destitute of advantages. He listens to the words of his favourite poet:

> " O mortal man, that livest here by toil,
> Cease to repine and grudge thy hard estate;
> That like an emmet thou must ever moil,
> Is a sad sentence of an ancient date;
> And, certes, there is for it reason great;
> Although sometimes it makes thee weep and wail,
> And curse thy stars, and early drudge and late;
> Withouten that would come a heavier bale,
> Loose life, unruly passions, and diseases pale!"

And, while he repeats the words, the grateful recollection comes across his mind, how often he has derived ineffable pleasure from the sweet song of " Nature's darling child." I can say, from my own experience, that there is no sort of farm labour inconsistent with the most refined and pleasurable state of the mind that I am acquainted with, thrashing alone excepted. That, indeed, I have always considered as insupportable drudgery, and think the ingenious mechanic who invented the thrashing machine, ought to have a statue among the benefactors of his country, and should be placed in the niche next to the person who introduced the culture of potatoes into this island.

Perhaps the thing of most importance in the education of the common people is, to prevent the intrusion of artificial wants. I bliss the memory of my worthy father for almost every thing in the dispositions of my mind, and my habits of life which I can approve of; and for none more than the pains he took to impress my mind with the sentiment, that nothing was more unworthy the character of a man, than that his happiness should in the least depend on what he should eat or drink. So early did he impress my mind with this, that although I was as fond of sweetmeats as children generally are, yet I seldom laid out any of the half-pence which relations or neighbours gave me at fairs, in the purchase of them; and if I did, every mouthful I swallowed was accompanied with shame and remorse; and to this hour I never indulge in the use of any delicacy, but I feel a considerable degree of self-reproach and alarm for the degradation of the human character. Such a habit of thinking I consider as of great consequence, both to the virtue and happiness of men in the lower ranks of life. And thus, Sir, I am of opinion, that if their minds are early and deeply imprest with a sense of the dignity of man, as such; with the love of independence and of industry, economy and temperance, as the most obvious means of making themselves independent, and the virtues most becoming their situation, and necessary to their happiness; men in the lower ranks of life may partake of the plea-

sures to be derived from the perusal of books calculated to improve the mind and refine the taste, without any danger of becoming more unhappy in their situation, or discontented with it. Nor do I think there is any danger of their becoming less useful. There are some hours every day that the most constant labourer is neither at work nor asleep. These hours are either appropriated to amusement or to sloth. If a taste for employing these hours in reading were cultivated, I do not suppose that the return to labour would be more difficult. Every one will allow, that the attachment to idle amusements, or even to sloth, has as powerful a tendency to abstract men from their proper business, as the attachment to books; while the one dissipates the mind, and the other tends to increase its powers of self-government. To those who are afraid that the improvement of the minds of the common people might be dangerous to the state, or the established order of society, I would remark, that turbulence and commotion are certainly very inimical to the feelings of a refined mind. Let the matter be brought to the test of experience and observation. Of what description of people are mobs and insurrections composed? Are they not universally owing to the want of enlargement and improvement of mind among the common people? Nay, let any one recollect the characters of those who formed the calmer and more deliberate associations, which lately gave so much alarm to the government of this country. I suppose few of the common people who were to be found in such societies, had the education and turn of mind I have been endeavouring to recommend. Allow me to suggest one reason for endeavouring to enlighten the minds of the common people. Their morals have hitherto been guarded by a sort of dim religious awe, which from a variety of causes seems wearing off. I think the alteration in this respect considerable, in the short period of my observation. I have already given my opinion of the effects of refinement of mind on morals and virtue. Whenever vulgar minds begin to shake off the dogmas of the religion in which they have been educated, the progress is quick and immediate to downright infidelity: and nothing but refinement of mind can enable them to distinguish between the pure essence of religion, and the gross systems which men have been perpetually connecting it with. In addition to what has already been done for the education of the common people of this country, in the establishment of parish schools, I wish to see the salaries augmented in some proportion to the present expense of living, and the earnings of people of similar rank, endowments and usefulness, in society; and I hope that the liberality of the present age will be no longer disgraced by refusing, to so useful a class of men, such encouragement as may make parish schools worth the attention of men fitted for the important duties of that office. In filling up the vacancies, I would have more attention paid to the candidate's capacity of reading the English language with grace and propriety; to his understanding thoroughly, and having a high relish for the beauties of English authors, both in poetry and prose; to that good sense and knowledge of human nature which would enable him to acquire some influence on the minds and affections of his scholars; to the general worth of his character, and the love of his king and his country, than to his proficiency in the knowledge of Latin and Greek. I would then have a sort of high English class established, not only for the purpose of teaching the pupils to read in that graceful and agreeable manner that might make them fond of reading, but to make them understand what they read, and discover the beauties of the author, in composition and sentiment. I would have established in every parish a small circulating library, consisting of the books which the young people had read extracts from in the collections they had read at school, and any other books well calculated to refine the mind, improve the moral feelings, recommend the practice of virtue, and communicate such knowledge as might be useful and suitable to the labouring classes of men. I would have the schoolmaster act as librarian, and in recommending books to his young friends, formerly his pupils, and letting in the light of them upon their young minds, he should have the assistance of the minister. If once such education were become general, the low delights of the public-house, and other scenes of riot and depravity, would be contemned and neglected, while industry, order, cleanliness, and every virtue which taste and independence of mind could recommend, would prevail and flourish. Thus possessed of a virtuous and enlightened populace, with high delight I should consider my native country as at the head of all the nations of the earth, ancient or modern.

Thus, Sir, have I executed my threat to the fullest extent, in regard to the length of my letter. If I had not presumed on doing it more to my liking, I should not have undertaken it; but I have not time to attempt it anew; nor, if I would, am I certain that I should succeed any better. I have learned to have less confidence in my capacity of writing on such subjects.

I am much obliged by your kind inquiries about my situation and prospects. I am much pleased with the soil of this farm, and with the terms on which I possess it. I receive great encouragement likewise in building, enclosing, and other conveniences, from my landlord Mr. G. S. Monteith, whose general character and conduct, as a landlord and country gentleman, I am highly pleased with. But the land is in such a state as to require a considerable immediate outlay of money in the purchase of manure, the grubbing of brush-wood, removing of stones, &c. which twelve years' struggle with a farm of a cold ungrateful soil has but ill prepared me for. If I can get these things done, however, to my mind, I think there is next to a certainty that in five or six years I shall be in

a hopeful way of attaining a situation which I think is eligible for happiness as any one I know; for I have always been of opinion, that if a man, bred to the habits of a farming life, who possesses a farm of good soil, on such terms as enables him easily to pay all demands, is not happy, he ought to look somewhere else than to his situation for the causes of his uneasiness.

I beg you will present my most respectful compliments to Mrs. Currie, and remember me to Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe, and Mr. Roscoe jun. whose kind attentions to me, when in Liverpool, I shall never forget.—I am, dear Sir, your most obedient, and much obliged humble servant,

GILBERT BURNS.

DEATH AND CHARACTER OF GILBERT BURNS.

This most worthy and talented individual died at Grant's Braes, in the neighbourhood of Haddington, and on the estate of Lady Blantyre, for whom he was long factor, on Sunday 8th April 1827, in the sixty-seventh year of his age.* He had no fixed or formed complaint, but for several months preceding his dissolution, there was a gradual decay of the powers of nature; and the infirmities of age, combined with severe domestic affliction, hastened the release of as pure a spirit as ever inhabited a human bosom. On the 4th of January he lost a daughter who had long been the pride of the family hearth; and on the 26th of February following, his youngest son,—a youth of great promise, died in Edinburgh of typhus fever, just as he was about being licensed for the ministry. These repeated trials were too much for the excellent old man; the mind which, throughout a long and blameless life, had pointed unwearedly to its home in the skies, ceased as it were, to hold communion with things earthly, and on the recurrence of that hallowed morning, which, like his sire of old, he had been accustomed to sanctify, he expired without a groan or struggle, in peace, and even love with all mankind, and in humble confidence of a blessed immortality.—The early life of Mr. Gilbert Burns is intimately blended with that of the poet. He was eighteen months younger than Robert—possessed the same penetrating judgment, and, according to Mr. Murdoch, their first instructor, surpassed him in vivacity till pretty nearly the age of manhood. When the greatest of our bards was invited by Dr. Blacklock to visit Edinburgh, the subject of the present imperfect Memoir was struggling in the churlish farm of Mossgiel, and toiling late and early to keep a house over his aged mother, and unprotected sisters. In these circumstances, the poet's success was the first thing that stemmed the ebbing tide of the fortunes of his family. In settling with Mr. Creech in February 1788, he received, as the profits of his second publication, about £500, and with that generosity, which formed a part of his nature, he immediately presented Gilbert with nearly the half of his whole wealth. Thus succoured, the deceased married a Miss Breckenridge, and removed to a better farm (Dinning in Dumfriesshire), but still reserved a seat at the family board for his truly venerable mother, who died a few years ago. While in Dinning, he was recommended to Lady Blantyre; and though our memory does not serve us precisely as to date, he must have been an inhabitant of East Lothian, for very nearly a quarter of a century. Her Ladyship's affairs were managed with the greatest fidelity and prudence; the factor and his constituent were worthy of each other; and in a district distinguished for the skill, talents, and opulence of its farmers, no man was more respected then Mr. Gilbert Burns. His wife, who still survives, bore him a family of six sons and five daughters; but of these, one son, and four daughters, predeceased their father. His means, though limited, were always managed with enviable frugality, as a proof of which we may state that every one of his boys received what is called a classical education.

* This sketch is by Mr. Macdiarmid, of the Dumfries Courier, in which Journal it first appeared.

No. LXXI.

THE POET'S SCRAP-BOOK.

The Poet kept a Scrap-Book, which was what the title imports, really a thing of shreds and patches. In the following extracts, we have not been quite so sparing as Dr. Currie, whose extracts are above, nor so very profuse as Mr. Cromek, who, in his Reliques, has turned the book inside out. The prose articles are chiefly in the way of maxims or observations they have less of worldly selfishness, and more of the religious feeling, than those of Rochfoucaud: The poetical scraps are numerous—such of them as are worth preserving, and have not already appeared amongst the poems, will be found below.

MY FATHER WAS A FARMER.

Tune—"The Weaver and his Shuttle, O."

My Father was a Farmer upon the Carrick border, O,
And carefully he bred me in decency and order, O;
He bade me act a manly part, though I had ne'er a farthing, O,
For without an honest manly heart, no man was worth regarding, O.

Then out into the world my course I did determine, O,
Tho' to be rich was not my wish, yet to be great was charming, O.
My talents they were not the worst; nor yet my education, O:
Resolv'd was I, at least to try, to mend my situation, O.

In many a way, and vain essay, I courted fortune's favour, O:
Some cause unseen, still stept between, to frustrate each endeavour, O;
Sometimes by foes I was o'erpow'rd; sometimes by friends forsaken, O;
And when my hope was at the top, I still was worst mistaken, O.

Then sore harass'd, and tir'd at last, with fortune's vain delusion, O;
I dropt my schemes, like idle dreams, and came to this conclusion, O;
The past was bad, and the future hid; its good or ill untryed, O;
But the present hour was in my pow'r, and so I would enjoy it, O.

No help, nor hope, nor view had I; nor person to befriend me, O;
So I must toil, and sweat and broil, and labour to sustain me, O,
To plough and sow, to reap and mow, my father bred me early, O;
For one, he said, to labour bred, was a match for fortune fairly, O.

Thus all obscure, unknown, and poor, thro' life I'm doomed to wander, O,
Till down my weary bones I lay in everlasting slumber, O:
No view nor care, but shun whate'er might breed me pain or sorrow, O;
I live to day, as well's I may, regardless of to-morrow, O.

But cheerful still, I am as well, as a monarch in a palace, O,
Tho' fortune's frown still hunts me down, with all her wonted malice, O;
I make indeed, my daily bread, but ne'er can make it farther, O;
But as daily bread is all I need, I do not much regard her, O.

When sometimes by my labour I earn a little money, O,
Some unforeseen misfortune comes generally upon me, O;
Mischance, mistake, or by neglect, or my good-natur'd folly, O;
But come what will, I've sworn it still, I'll ne'er be melancholy, O.

All you who follow wealth and power with unremitting ardour, O,
The more in this you look for bliss, you leave your view the farther, O;
Had you the wealth Potosi boasts, or nations to adore you, O,
A cheerful honest hearted clown I will prefer before you, O.

ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF ROBERT RUISSEAUX.*

Now Robin lies in his last lair,
He'll gabble rhyme, nor sing nae mair,
Cauld poverty, wi' hungry stare,
Nae mair shall fear him;
Nor anxious fear, nor cankert care
E'er mair come near him.

To tell the truth, they seldom fash't him,
Except the moment that they crush't him;
For sune as chance or fate had husht 'em,
Tho' e'er sae short,
Then wi' a rhyme or song he lasht 'em,
And thought it sport.—

Tho' he was bred to kintra wark,
And counted was baith wight and stark,
Yet that was never Robin's mark
To mak a man;
But tell him, he was a learn'd clark,
Ye roos'd him then. †

Melancholy.—There was a certain period of my life that my spirit was broke by repeated losses and disasters, which threatened, and indeed effected, the utter ruin of my fortune. My body too was attacked by that most dreadful distemper, a hypochondria, or confirmed melancholy: In this wretched state, the recollection of which makes me yet shudder, I hung my harp on the willow trees, except in some lucid intervals, in one of which I composed the following. (*Here follows the prayer in distress.* p. 78.)—*March* 1784.

Religious Sentiment.—What a creature is man! A little alarm last night, and to-day, that I am mortal, has made such a revolution on my spirits! There is no philosophy, no divinity, that comes half so much home to the mind. I have no idea of courage that braves Heaven: 'Tis the wild ravings of an imaginary hero in Bedlam.

My favourite feature in Milton's Satan is his manly fortitude in supporting what cannot be remedied—in short, the wild, broken fragments of a noble, exalted mind in ruins. I meant no more by saying he was a favourite hero of mine.

I hate the very idea of a controversial divinity; as I firmly believe that every honest upright man, of whatever sect, will be accepted of the deity. I despise the superstition of a fanatic, but I love the religion of a man.

Nothing astonishes me more, when a little sickness clogs the wheel of life, than the thoughtless career we run in the hour of health. "None saith, where is God, my maker, that giveth songs in the night: who teacheth us more knowledge than the beasts of the field, and more understanding than the fowls of the air."

My creed is pretty nearly expressed in the last clause of *Jamie Dean's* grace, an honest weaver in Ayrshire; "Lord grant that we may lead a gude life! for a gude life maks a gude end, at least it helps weel!"

A decent means of livelihood in the world, an approving God, a peaceful conscience, and one firm trusty friend; can any body that has these, be said to be unhappy?

The dignified and dignifying consciousness of an honest man, and the well grounded trust in approving heaven, are two most substantial sources of happiness.

Give me, my Maker, to remember thee! Give me to feel "another's woe;" and continue with me that dear-lov'd friend that feels with mine!

In proportion as we are wrung with grief, or distracted with anxiety, the ideas of a compassionate Deity, an Almighty Protector, are doubly dear.

I have been, this morning, taking a peep through, as Young finely says, "the dark postern of time long elapsed;" 'twas a rueful prospect! What a tissue of thoughtlessness, weakness, and folly! My life reminded me of a ruined temple. What strength, what proportion in some parts! What unsightly gaps, what prostrate ruins in others! I kneeled down before the Father of Mercies, and said, "Father I have sinned against Heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son." I rose, eased, and strengthened.

* *Ruisseaux*—streams—a play on his own name.
† *Ye roos'd*—ye prais'd.

LETTERS, 1788.

No. LXXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Edinburgh, 21*st Jan.* 1788.

After six weeks' confinement, I am beginning to walk across the room. They have been six horrible weeks; anguish and low spirits made me unfit to read, write, or think.

I have a hundred times wished that one could resign life as an officer resigns a commission: for I would not *take in* any poor, ignorant wretch, by *selling out*. Lately I was a sixpenny private; and, God knows, a miserable soldier enough; now I march to the campaign, a starving cadet: a little more conspicuously wretched.

I am ashamed of all this; for though I do want bravery for the warfare of life, I could wish, like some other soldiers, to have as much fortitude or cunning as to dissemble or conceal my cowardice.

As soon as I can bear the journey, which will be, I suppose, about the middle of next week, I leave Edinburgh, and soon after I shall pay my grateful duty at Dunlop-house.

No. LXXIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, 12*th Feb.* 1788.

Some things, in your late letters, hurt me: not that *you say them*, but that *you mistake me*. Religion, my honoured Madam, has not only been all my life my chief dependence, but my dearest enjoyment. I have indeed been the luckless victim of wayward follies; but, alas! I have ever been "more fool than knave." A mathematician without religion, is a probable character; an irreligious poet, is a monster.

. . . . . .

No. LXXIV.

TO A LADY.

MADAM, *Mossgiel*, 7*th March*, 1788.

The last paragraph in yours of the 30th February affected me most, so I shall begin my answer where you ended your letter. That I am often a sinner with any little wit I have, I do confess: but I have taxed my recollection to no purpose, to find out when it was employed against you. I hate an ungenerous sarcasm, a great deal worse than I do the devil; at least as Milton describes him; and though I may be rascally enough to be sometimes guilty of it myself, I cannot endure it in others. You, my honoured friend, who cannot appear in any light, but you are sure of being respectable—you can afford to pass by an occasion to display your wit, because you may depend for fame on your sense; or if you choose to be silent, you know you can rely on the gratitude of many and the esteem of all; but God help us who are wits or witlings by profession, if we stand not for fame there, we sink unsupported!

I am highly flattered by the news you tell me of Coila.* I may say to the fair painter who does me so much honour, as Dr. Beattie says to Ross the poet, of his Muse Scotia, from which, by the bye, I took the idea of Coila: ('Tis a poem of Beattie's in the Scots dialect, which perhaps you have never seen.)

"Ye shak your head, but o' my fegs,
Ye've set auld Scotia on her legs:
Lang had she lien wi' buffe and flegs,
Bombaz'd and dizzie,
Her fiddle wanted strings and pegs,
Waes me, poor hizzie."

No. LXXV.

TO MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN.

Mauchline, 31*st March*, 1788.

Yesterday, my dear Sir, as I was riding through a track of melancholy joyless muirs, between Galloway and Ayrshire, it being Sunday, I turned my thoughts to psalms, and hymns, and spiritual songs; and your favourite air, *Captain O'Kean*, coming at length in my head, I tried these words to it. You will see that the first part of the tune must be repeated.†

I am tolerably pleased with these verses, but as I have only a sketch of the tune, I leave it with you to try if they suit the measure of the music.

I am so harassed with care and anxiety, about this farming project of mine, that my muse has degenerated into the veriest prose-wench that ever picked cinders, or followed a tinker. When I am fairly got into the routine of business, I shall trouble you with a longer epistle; perhaps with some queries respecting farming; at present, the world sits such a load on my mind, that it has effaced almost every trace of the ——— in me.

My very best compliments and good wishes to Mrs. Cleghorn.

No. LXXVI.

FROM MR. ROBERT CLEGHORN.

Saughton Mills, 27*th April*, 1788.

MY DEAR BROTHER FARMER,

I was favoured with your very kind letter of

* A lady was making a picture from the description of Coila in the *Vision*.

† Here the bard gives the first stanza of the *Chevalier's Lament*.

the 31st ult. and consider myself greatly obliged to you, for your attention in sending me the song to my favourite air, *Captain O'Kean*. The words delight me much; they fit the tune to a hair. I wish you would send me a verse or two more; and if you have no objection, I would have it in the Jacobite style. Suppose it should be sung after the fatal field of Culloden by the unfortunate Charles: Tenducci personates the lovely Mary Stuart in the song *Queen Mary's Lamentation*.—Why may not I sing in the person of her great-great-great grandson?*

Any skill I have in country business you may truly command. Situation, soil, customs of countries may vary from each other, but *Farmer Attention* is a good farmer in every place. I beg to hear from you soon. Mrs. Cleghorn joins me in best compliments.

I am, in the most comprehensive sense of the word, your very sincere friend,

ROBERT CLEGHORN.

No. LXXVII.

TO MR. JAMES SMITH,

AVON PRINTFIELD, LINLITHGOW.

Mauchline, April 28, 1788.

BEWARE of your Strasburgh, my good Sir! Look on this as the opening of a correspondence like the opening of a twenty-four gun battery!

There is no understanding a man properly, without knowing something of his previous ideas (that is to say, if the man has any ideas; for I know many who in the animal-muster, pass for men, that are the scanty masters of only one idea on any given subject, and by far the greatest part of your acquaintances and mine can barely boast of ideas, 1.25—1.5—1.75, or some such fractional matter), so to let you a little into the secrets of my pericranium, there is, you must know, a certain clean-limbed, handsome, bewitching young hussy of your acquaintance, to whom I have lately and privately given a matrimonial title to my corpus.

"Bode a robe and wear it,"

Says the wise old Scots adage! I hate to presage ill-luck; and as my girl has been *doubly* kinder to me than even the best of women usually are to their partners of our sex, in similar circumstances, I reckon on twelve times a brace of children against I celebrate my twelfth wedding day: these twenty-four will give me twenty-four gossippings, twenty-four christenings, (I mean one equal to two), and I hope by the blessing of the God of my fathers, to make them twenty-four dutiful children to their parents, twenty-four useful members of society, and twenty-four approven servants of their God! . . . . . "Light's heartsome," quo' the wife when she was stealing sheep. You see what a lamp I have hung up to lighten your paths, when you are idle enough to explore the combinations and relations of my ideas. 'Tis now as plain as a pike-staff, why a twenty-four gun battery was a metaphor I could readily employ.

Now for business.—I intend to present Mrs. Burns with a printed shawl, an article of which I dare say you have variety: 'tis my first present to her since I have *irrevocably* called her mine, and I have a kind of whimsical wish to get her the said first present from an old and much valued friend of hers and mine, a trusty *Trojan*, on whose friendship I count myself possessed of a life-rent lease.

. . . . . .

Look on this letter as a "beginning of sorrows;" I'll write you till your eyes ache with reading nonsense.

Mrs. Burns ('tis only her private designation), begs her best compliments to you.

No. LXXVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MADAM, *Mauchline, 28th April*, 1788.

YOUR powers of reprehension must be great indeed, as I assure you they made my heart ache with penitential pangs, even though I was really not guilty. As I commence farmer at Whitsunday, you will easily guess I must be pretty busy; but that is not all. As I got the offer of the excise business without solicitation; and as it costs me only six months' attendance for instructions, to entitle me to a commission; which commission lies by me, and at any future period, on my simple petition, can be resumed; I thought five and thirty pounds a-year was no bad dernier resort for a poor poet, if fortune in her jade tricks should kick him down from the little eminence to which she has lately helped him up.

For this reason, I am at present attending these instructions, to have them completed before Whitsunday. Still, Madam, I prepared with the sincerest pleasure to meet you at the Mount, and came to my brother's on Saturday night, to set out on Sunday; but for some nights preceding I had slept in an apartment, where the force of the winds and rain was only mitigated by being sifted through numberless apertures in the windows, wails, &c. In consequence I was on Sunday, Monday, and part of Tuesday unable to stir out of bed, with all the miserable effects of a violent cold.

* Our Poet took this advice. See poetry for the whole of that beautiful song—the Chevalier's Lament.

You see, Madam, the truth of the French maxim, *Le vrai n'est pas toujours le vrai-semblable;* your last was so full of expostulation, and was something so like the language of an offended friend, that I began to tremble for a correspondence, which I had with grateful pleasure set down as one of the greatest enjoyments of my future life.

. . . . . .

Your books have delighted me; *Virgil, Dryden,* and *Tasso,* were all equal strangers to me; but of this more at large in my next.

No. LXXIX.

FROM THE REV. JOHN SKINNER.

DEAR SIR, *Linshart, 28th April,* 1788.

I RECEIVED your last, with the curious present you have favoured me with, and would have made proper acknowledgments before now, but that I have been necessarily engaged in matters of a different complexion. And now that I have got a little respite, I make use of it to thank you for this valuable instance of your good will, and to assure you that, with the sincere heart of a true Scotsman, I highly esteem both the gift and the giver: as a small testimony of which I have herewith sent you for your amusement (and in a form which I hope you will excuse for saving postage) the two songs I wrote about to you already. *Charming Nancy* is the real production of genius in a ploughman of twenty years of age at the time of its appearing, with no more education than what he picked up at an old farmer-grandfather's fireside, though now, by the strength of natural parts, he is clerk to a thriving bleachfield in the neighbourhood. And I doubt not but you will find in it a simplicity and delicacy, with some turns of humour, that will please one of your taste; at least it pleased me when I first saw it, if that can be any recommendation to it. The other is entirely descriptive of my own sentiments, and you may make use of one or both as you shall see good.*

You will oblige me by presenting my respects to your host, Mr. Cruikshank, who has given such high approbation to my poor *Latinity;* you may let him know, that as I have likewise been a dabbler in Latin poetry, I have two things that I would, if he desires it, submit not to his judgment, but to his amusement: the one, a translation of *Christ's Kirk o' the Green,* printed at Aberdeen some years ago; the other, *Batrachomyomachia Homeri Latinis versibus cum additamentis,* given in lately to Chalmers, to print if he pleases. Mr. C. will know *Seria non semper delectant, non joca semper. Semper delectant seria mixta jocis.*

I have just room to repeat compliments and good wishes from,

Sir, your humble servant,
JOHN SKINNER.

No. LXXX.

TO PROFESSOR DUGALD STEWART.

SIR, *Mauchline, 3d May,* 1787.

I ENCLOSE you one or two more of my bagatelles. If the fervent wishes of honest gratitude have any influence with that great, unknown Being, who frames the chain of causes and events; prosperity and happiness will attend your visit to the Continent, and return you safe to your native shore.

Wherever I am, allow me, Sir, to claim it as my privilege, to acquaint you with my progress in my trade of rhymes; as I am sure I could say it with truth, that, next to my little fame, and the having it in my power to make life

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* CHARMING NANCY.

A SONG, BY A BUCHAN PLOUGHMAN.

Tune—"Humours of Glen."

SOME sing of sweet Mally, some sing of fair Nelly,
And some call sweet Susie the cause of their pain:
Some love to be jolly, some love melancholy,
And some love to sing of the Humours of Glen.
But my only fancy, is my pretty Nancy,
In venting my passion, I'll strive to be plain,
I'll ask no more treasure, I'll seek no more pleasure,
But thee, my dear Nancy, gin thou wert my ain.

Her beauty delights me, her kindness invites me,
Her pleasant behaviour is free from all stain;
Therefore, my sweet jewel, O do not prove cruel,
Consent, my dear Nancy, and come be my ain:
Her carriage is comely, her language is homely,
Her dress is quite decent when ta'en in the main:
She's blooming in feature, she's handsome in stature,
My charming, dear Nancy, O wert thou my ain!.

Like Phœbus adorning the fair ruddy morning,
Her bright eyes are sparkling, her brows are serene,
Her yellow locks shining, in beauty combining,
My charming, sweet Nancy, wilt thou be my ain?
The whole of her face is with maidenly graces
Array'd like the gowans, that grow in yon glen,
She's well shaped and slender, true hearted and tender,
My charming, sweet Nancy, O wert thou my ain!

I'll seek through the nation for some habitation,
To shelter my dear from the cold, snow, and rain,
With songs to my deary, I'll keep her aye cheery,
My charming, sweet Nancy, gin thou wert my ain.
I'll work at my calling, to furnish thy dwelling,
With ev'ry thing needful thy life to sustain;
Thou shalt not sit single, but by a clear ingle,
I'll marrow thee, Nancy, when thou art my ain.

I'll make true affection the constant direction
Of loving my Nancy while life doth remain:
Tho' youth will be wasting, true love shall be lasting,
My charming, sweet Nancy, gin thou wert my ain.
But what if my Nancy should alter her fancy,
To favour another be forward and fain,
I will not compel her, but plainly I'll tell her,
Begone thou false Nancy, thou'se ne'er be my ain.

The Old Man's Song, (see p. 135).

more comfortable to those whom nature has made dear to me, I shall ever regard your countenance, your patronage, your friendly good offices, as the most valued consequence of my late success in life.

No. LXXXI.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MADAM, *Mauchline, 4th May*, 1788.

DRYDEN'S *Virgil* has delighted me. I do not know whether the critics will agree with me, but the *Georgics* are to me by far the best of Virgil. It is indeed a species of writing entirely new to me; and has filled my head with a thousand fancies of emulation; but, alas! when I read the *Georgics*, and then survey my own powers, 'tis like the idea of a Shetland poney, drawn up by the side of a thorough-bred hunter, to start for the plate. I own I am disappointed in the *Æneid*. Faultless correctness may please, and does highly please the lettered critic; but to that awful character I have not the most distant pretensions. I do not know whether I do not hazard my pretensions to be a critic of any kind, when I say that I think Virgil, in many instances, a *servile* copier of Homer. If I had the *Odyssey* by me, I could parallel many passages where Virgil has evidently copied, but by no means improved Homer. Nor can I think there is any thing of this owing to the translators; for, from every thing I have seen of Dryden, I think him, in genius and fluency of language, Pope's master. I have not perused Tasso enough to form an opinion: in some future letter, you shall have my ideas of him; though I am conscious my criticisms must be very inaccurate and imperfect, as there I have ever felt and lamented my want of learning most.

No. LXXXII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Mauchline, May 26, 1788.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM two kind letters in your debt, but I have been from home, and horridly busy buying and preparing for my farming business; over and above the plague of my Excise instructions, which this week will finish.

As I flatter my wishes that I foresee many future years' correspondence between us, 'tis foolish to talk of excusing dull epistles: a dull letter may be a very kind one. I have the pleasure to tell you that I have been extremely fortunate in all my buyings and bargainings hitherto; Mrs. Burns not excepted; which title I now avow to the world. I am truly pleased with this last affair: it has indeed added to my anxieties for futurity, but it has given a stability to my mind and resolutions, unknown before; and the poor girl has the most sacred enthusiasm of attachment to me, and has not a wish but to gratify my every idea of her deportment.

I am interrupted.

Farewell! my dear Sir.

No. LXXXIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MADAM, *27th May*, 1788.

I HAVE been torturing my philosophy to no purpose, to account for that kind partiality of yours, which, unlike . . . . . ., has followed me in my return to the shade of life, with assiduous benevolence. Often did I regret in the fleeting hours of my late will-o'-wisp appearance, that "here I had no continuing city;" and but for the consolation of a few solid guineas, could almost lament the time that a momentary acquaintance with wealth and splendour put me so much out of conceit with the sworn companions of my road through life, insignificance, and poverty.

. . . . . .

There are few circumstances relating to the unequal distribution of the good things of this life, that give me more vexation (I mean in what I see around me) than the importance the opulent bestow on their trifling family affairs, compared with the very same things on the contracted scale of a cottage. Last afternoon I had the honour to spend an hour or two at a good woman's fireside, where the planks that composed the floor were decorated with a splendid carpet, and the gay table sparkled with silver and china. 'Tis now about term-day, and there has been a revolution among those creatures, who, though in appearance partakers, and equally noble partakers of the same nature with madame; are from time to time, their nerves, their sinews, their health, strength, wisdom, experience, genius, time, nay, a good part of their very thoughts, sold for months and years, ... , not only to the necessities, the conveniences, but the caprices of the important few.* We talked of the insignificant creatures; nay, notwithstanding their general stupidity and rascality, did some of the poor devils the honour to com-

* Servants in Scotland are hired from term to term, *i. e.* from Whitsunday to Martinmas, &c.

mend them. But light be the turf upon his breast, who taught "Reverence thyself." We looked down on the upolished wretches, their impertinent wives and clouterly brats, as the lordly bull does on the little dirty ant-hill, whose puny inhabitants he crushes in the carelessness of his ramble, or tosses in air in the wantonness of his pride.

. . . . . .

No. LXXXIV.

TO THE SAME.

(AT MR. DUNLOP'S, HADDINGTON.)

Ellisland, 13th June, 1788.

"Where'er I roam, whatever realms I see,
My heart, untravell'd, fondly turns to thee;
Still to my friend it turns with ceaseless pain,
And drags at each remove a lengthen'd chain."
GOLDSMITH.

THIS is the second day, my honoured friend, that I have been on my farm. A solitary inmate of an old, smoky *spence;* far from every object I love, or by whom I am loved; nor any acquaintance older than yesterday, except *Jenny Geddes*, the old mare I ride on; while uncouth cares, and novel plans, hourly insult my awkward ignorance and bashful inexperience. There is a foggy atmosphere native to my soul in the hour of care, consequently the dreary objects seem larger than the life. Extreme sensibility, irritated and prejudiced on the gloomy side by a series of misfortunes and disappointments, at that period of my existence when the soul is laying in her cargo of ideas for the voyage of life, is, I believe, the principal cause of this unhappy frame of mind.

"The valiant, in himself, what can he suffer?
Or what need he regard his *single* woes?" &c.

Your surmise, Madam, is just; I am indeed a husband.

. . . . . .

I found a once much-loved and still much-loved female, literally and truly cast out to the mercy of the naked elements, but as I enabled her to *purchase* a shelter; and there is no sporting with a fellow-creature's happiness or misery.

The most placid good-nature and sweetness of disposition: a warm heart, gratefully devoted with all its powers to love me; vigorous health and sprightly cheerfulness, set off to the best advantage, by a more than common handsome figure; these, I think, in a woman, may make a good wife, though she should never have read a page, but *the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament*, nor have danced in a brighter assembly than a penny pay-wedding.

. . . . . .

No. LXXXV.

TO MR. P. HILL.

MY DEAR HILL,

I SHALL say nothing at all to your mad present—you have so long and often been of important service to me, and I suppose you mean to go on conferring obligations until I shall not be able to lift up my face before you. In the meantime, as Sir Roger de Coverley, because it happened to be a cold day in which he made his will, ordered his servants great coats for mourning, so, because I have been this week plagued with an indigestion, I have sent you by the carrier a fine old ewe-milk cheese.

Indigestion is the devil: nay, 'tis the devil and all. It besets a man in every one of his senses. I lose my appetite at the sight of successful knavery; and sicken to loathing at the noise and nonsense of self-important folly. When the hollow-hearted wretch takes me by the hand, the feeling spoils my dinner; the proud man's wine so offends my palate, that it chokes me in the gullet; and the *pulvilis'd*, feathered, pert coxcomb, is so disgustful in my nostril that my stomach turns.

If ever you have any of these disagreeable sensations, let me prescribe for you patience and a bit of my cheese. I know that you are no niggard of your good things among your friends, and some of them are in much need of a slice. There in my eye is our friend Smellie, a man positively of the first abilities and greatest strength of mind, as well as one of the best hearts and keenest wits that I have ever met with: when you see him, as, alas! he too is smarting at the pinch of distressful circumstances, aggravated by the sneer of contumelious greatness—a bit of my cheese alone will not cure him, but if you add a tankard of brown stout, and superadd a magnum of right Oporto, you will see his sorrows vanish like the morning mist before the summer sun.

C——h, the earliest friend, except my only brother, that I have on earth, and one of the worthiest fellows that ever any man called by the name of friend, if a luncheon of my cheese would help to rid him of some of his superabundant modesty, you would do well to give it him.

David * with his *Courant* comes, too, across my recollection, and I beg you will help him

* Printer of the Edinburgh Evening Courant.

Fac-Simile of the Poets Handwriting.

Taken from a letter to his friend Mr. ROBERT AINSLIE Writer to the Signet, Edinburgh, Author of "REASONS for the HOPE that is in us."

Mossgiel 14th June 1788

This is now the third day, My dearest Sir, that I have sojourned in these regions; and during these three days you have occupied more of my thoughts than in three weeks preceding: in Ayr-shire I have several Variations ~~of~~ Friendship's Compass, here it points invariably to the Pole. — My Farm gives me a good many uncouth Cares & Anxieties, but I hate the language of Complaint — Job, or some one of his friends, says well, "Why should a living man complain?"

What books are you reading, or what is the subject of your thoughts, beside the great studies of your Profession? You said something about Religion in your last ~~letter~~, I don't exactly remember what it was, as the letter is in Ayrshire, but I thought it not only prettily said but nobly thought.

Keep my old Direction, "at Mauchline," till I inform myself of another. — Adieu!

Robt Burns

largely from the said ewe-milk cheese, to enable him to digest those ——— bedaubing paragraphs with which he is eternally larding the lean characters of certain great men in a certain great town. I grant you the periods are very well turned: so, a fresh egg is a very good thing; but when thrown at a man in a pillory it does not at all improve his figure, not to mention the irreparable loss of the egg.

My facetious friend, D———r, I would wish also to be a partaker; not to digest his spleen, for that he laughs off, but to digest his last night's wine at the last field-day of the Crochallan corps.*

Among our common friends I must not forget one of the dearest of them, Cunningham. The brutality, insolence, and selfishness of a world unworthy of having such a fellow as he is in it, I know sticks in his stomach, and if you can help him to any thing that will make him a little easier on that score, it will be very obliging.

As to honest J—— S———e, he is such a contented happy man that I know not what can annoy him, except perhaps he may not have got the better of a parcel of modest anecdotes which a certain poet gave him one night at supper, the last time the said poet was in town.

Though I have mentioned so many men of law, I shall have nothing to do with them professedly—the Faculty are beyond my prescription. As to their *clients*, that is another thing; God knows they have much to digest!

The clergy I pass by; their profundity of erudition, and their liberality of sentiment; their total want of pride, and their detestation of hypocrisy, are so proverbially notorious as to place them far, far above either my praise or censure.

I was going to mention a man of worth, whom I have the honour to call friend, the Laird of Craigdarroch; but I have spoken to the landlord of the King's arms inn here, to have, at the next county-meeting, a large ewe-milk cheese on the table, for the benefit of the Dumfriesshire whigs, to enable them to digest the Duke of Queensberry's late political conduct.

I have just this moment an opportunity of a private hand to Edinburgh, as perhaps you would not digest double postage.

No. LXXXVI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, June 14, 1788.

This is now the third day, my dearest Sir, that I have sojourned in these regions; and during these three days you have occupied more of my thoughts than in three weeks preceding: In Ayrshire I have several *variations* of friendship's compass, here it points invariably to the pole.—My farm gives me a good many uncouth cares and anxieties, but I hate the language of complaint. Job, or some one of his friends, says well—"Why should a living man complain?"

I have lately been much mortified with contemplating an unlucky imperfection in the very framing and construction of my soul; namely, a blundering inaccuracy of her olfactory organs in hitting the scent of craft or design in my fellow creatures. I do not mean any compliment to my ingenuousness, or to hint that the defect is in consequence of the unsuspicious simplicity of conscious truth and honour: I take it to be, in some way or other, an imperfection in the mental sight; or, metaphor apart, some modification of dulness. In two or three small instances lately, I have been most shamefully out.

I have all along, hitherto, in the warfare of life, been bred to arms among the light-horse—the piquet-guards of fancy; a kind of hussars and highlanders of the *brain;* but I am firmly resolved to *sell out* of these giddy battalions, who have no ideas of a battle but fighting the foe, or of a siege but storming the town. Cost what it will, I am determined to buy in among the grave squadrons of heavy-armed thought, or the artillery corps of plodding contrivance.

What books are you reading, or what is the subject of your thoughts, besides the great studies of your profession? You said something about religion in your last. I don't exactly remember what it was, as the letter is in Ayrshire; but I thought it not only prettily said, but nobly thought. You will make a noble fellow if once you were married. I make no reservation of your being *well*-married: You have so much sense, and knowledge of human nature, that though you may not realize perhaps the ideas of romance, yet you will never be *ill-married.*

Were it not for the terrors of my ticklish situation respecting provision for a family of children, I am decidedly of opinion that the step I have taken is vastly for my happiness. As it is, I look to the excise scheme as a certainty of maintenance; a maintenance, luxury to what either Mrs. Burns or I were born to.

Adieu.

* A club of choice spirits.

No. LXXXVII.

TO MR. MORISON,* Wright, Mauchline.

Ellisland, June 22, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

Necessity obliges me to go into my new

* This letter refers to chairs, and other articles of furniture which the Poet had ordered.

house, even before it be plastered. I will inhabit the one end until the other is finished. About three weeks more, I think, will at farthest, be my time, beyond which I cannot stay in this present house. If ever you wished to deserve the blessing of him that was ready to perish; if ever you were in a situation that a little kindness would have rescued you from many evils; if ever you hope to find rest in future states of untried being;—get these matters of mine ready. My servant will be out in the beginning of next week for the clock. My compliments to Mrs. Morison.

I am, after all my tribulation,
Dear Sir, yours.

No. LXXXVIII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, June 30, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I JUST now received your brief epistle; and to take vengeance on your laziness, I have, you see, taken a long sheet of writing-paper, and have begun at the top of the page, intending to scribble on to the very last corner.

I am vext at that affair of the . . ., but dare not enlarge on the subject until you send me your direction, as I suppose that will be altered on your late master and friend's death. I am concerned for the old fellow's exit, only as I fear it may be to your disadvantage in any respect—for an old man's dying, except he have been a very benevolent character, or in some particular situation of life, that the welfare of the poor or the helpless depended on him, I think it an event of the most trifling moment to the world. Man is naturally a kind benevolent animal, but he is dropt into such a needy situation here in this vexatious world, and has such a whoreson, hungry, growling, multiplying pack of necessities, appetites, passions, and desires about him, ready to devour him for want of other food; that in fact he must lay aside his cares for others, that he may look properly to himself. You have been imposed upon in paying Mr. M—— for the profile of a Mr. H. I did not mention it in my letter to you, nor did I ever give Mr. M—— any such order. I have no objection to lose the money, but I will *not* have any such profile in my possession.

I desired the carrier to pay you, but as I mentioned only 15s. to him, I will rather inclose you a guinea-note. I have it not indeed to spare here, as I am only a sojourner in a strange land in this place; but in a day or two I return to Mauchline, and there I have the bank-notes through the house, like salt permits.

There is a great degree of folly in talking unnecessarily of one's private affairs. I have just now been interrupted by one of my new neighbours, who has made himself absolutely contemptible in my eyes, by his silly, garrulous pruriency. I know it has been a fault of my own too; but from this moment I abjure it as I would the service of hell! Your poets, spendthrifts, and other fools of that kidney, pretend, forsooth, to crack their jokes on prudence, but 'tis a squalid vagabond glorying in his rags. Still, imprudence respecting money matters, is much more pardonable than imprudence respecting character. I have no objection to prefer prodigality to avarice, in some few instances; but I appeal to your observation, if you have not met, and often met, with the same little disingenuousness, the same hollow-hearted insincerity, and disintegritive depravity of principle, in the hackney'd victims of profusion, as in the unfeeling children of parsimony. I have every possible reverence for the much-talked-of world beyond the grave, and I wish that which piety believes and virtue deserves, may be all matter of fact—But in things belonging to and terminating in this present scene of existence, man has serious and interesting business on hand. Whether a man shall shake hands with welcome in the distinguished elevation of respect, or shrink from contempt in the abject corner of insignificance; whether he shall wanton under the tropic of plenty, at least enjoy himself in the comfortable latitudes of easy convenience, or starve in the arctic circle of dreary poverty; whether he shall rise in the manly consciousness of a self-approving mind, or sink beneath a galling load of regret and remorse—these are alternatives of the last moment.

You see how I preach. You used occasionally to sermonize too; I wish you would in charity, favour me with a sheet full in your own way. I admire the close of a letter Lord Bolingbroke writes to Dean Swift, "Adieu, dear Swift! with all thy faults I love thee entirely: make an effort to love me with all mine!" Humble servant, and all that trumpery, is now such a prostituted business, that honest friendship, in her sincere way, must have recourse to her primitive, simple,—farewell!

No. LXXXIX.

TO MR. GEORGE LOCKHART,
MERCHANT, GLASGOW.

MY DEAR SIR, *Mauchline, July* 18, 1788.

I AM just going for Nithsdale, else I would certainly have transcribed some of my rhyming things for you. The Miss Bailies I have seen in Edinburgh. "Fair and lovely are thy works, Lord God Almighty! Who would not praise Thee for these Thy gifts in Thy goodness to the sons of men!" It needed not your fine taste to admire them. I declare, one day I had the honour of dining at Mr. Bailie's, I was almost

in the predicament of the children of Israel, when they could not look on Moses's face for the glory that shone in it when he descended from Mount Sinai.

I did once write a poetic address from the falls of Bruar to his Grace of Athole, when I was in the Highlands. When you return to Scotland let me know, and I will send such of my pieces as please myself best.

I return to Mauchline in about ten days.

My compliments to Mr. Purden. I am in truth, but at present in haste,

Yours sincerely.

No. XC.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Mauchline, 2d Aug. 1788.

HONOURED MADAM,

YOUR kind letter welcomed me yesternight, to Ayrshire. I am indeed seriously angry with you at the *quantum* of your *luckpenny;* but vexed and hurt as I was, I could not help laughing very heartily at the noble lord's apology for the missed napkin.

I would write you from Nithsdale, and give you my direction there, but I have scarce an opportunity of calling at a post-office once in a fortnight. I am six miles from Dumfries, am scarcely ever in it myself, and, as yet, have little acquaintance in the neighbourhood. Besides, I am now very busy on my farm, building a dwelling-house; as at present I am almost an evangelical man in Nithsdale, for I have scarce "where to lay my head."

There are some passages in your last that brought tears in my eyes. "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith." The repository of these "sorrows of the heart," is a kind of *sanctum sanctorum;* and 'tis only a chosen friend, and that too at particular, sacred times, who dares enter into them.

"Heaven oft tears the bosom chords
That nature finest strung."

You will excuse this quotation for the sake of the author. Instead of entering on this subject farther, I shall transcribe you a few lines I wrote in a hermitage belonging to a gentleman in my Nithsdale neighbourhood. They are almost the only favours the muse has conferred on me in that country.

(*The lines on Friar Carse hermitage, beginging*

Thou whom chance may hither lead.)

Since I am in the way of transcribing, the following were the production of yesterday as I jogged through the wild hills of New Cumnock. I intended inserting them, or something like them, in an epistle I am going to write to the gentleman on whose friendship my excise hopes depend, Mr. Graham of Fintry; one of the worthiest and most accomplished gentlemen, not only of this country, but I will dare to say it, of this age. The following are just the first crude thoughts "unhousel'd, unanointed, unanell'd."

. . . . . .

Pity the tuneful muses' helpless train;
Weak, timid landsmen on life's stormy main:
The world were blest, did bless on them depend;
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend!"
The little fate bestows they share as soon;
Unlike sage, proverb'd, wisdom's hard-wrung boon.
Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son
Who life and wisdom at one race begun;
Who feel by reason and who give by rule;
Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool!
Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should;*
We own they're prudent, but who feels they're good?

Ye wise one's, hence! ye hurt the social eye;
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
But come . . . . . .

Here the muse left me. I am astonished at what you tell me of Anthony's writing me. I never received it. Poor fellow! you vex me much by telling me that he is unfortunate. I shall be in Ayrshire ten days from this date. I have just room for an old Roman farewell!

No. XCI.

TO THE SAME.

Mauchline, 10th August, 1788.

MY MUCH HONOURED FRIEND,

YOURS of the 24th June is before me. I found it, as well as another valued friend—my wife, waiting to welcome me to Ayrshire: I met both with the sincerest pleasure.

When I write you, Madam, I do not sit down to answer every paragraph of yours, by echoing every sentiment, like the faithful commons of Great Britain in parliament assembled, answering a speech from the best of kings! I express myself in the fulness of my heart, and may perhaps be guilty of neglecting some of your kind inquiries; but not from your very odd reason that I do not read your letters. All your epistles for several months have cost me nothing, ex-

cept a swelling throb of gratitude, or a deep-felt sentiment of veneration.

Mrs. Burns, Madam, is the identical woman

. . . . . .

When she first found herself "as women wish to be who love their lords;" as I loved her nearly to distraction, we took steps for a private marriage. Her parents got the hint; and not only forbade me her company and their house, but on my rumoured West Indian voyage, got a warrant to put me in jail, till I should find security in my about-to-be paternal relation. You know my lucky reverse of fortune. On my eclatant return to Mauchline, I was made very welcome to visit my girl. The usual consequences began to betray her; and as I was at that time laid up a cripple in Edinburgh, she was turned, literally turned out of doors, and I wrote to a friend to shelter her, till my return, when our marriage was declared. Her happiness or misery was in my hands, and who could trifle with such a deposit?

. . . . . .

I can easily *fancy* a more agreeable companion for my journey of life, but, upon my honour, I have never *seen* the individual instance.

. . . . . .

Circumstanced as I am, I could never have got a female partner for life, who could have entered into my favourite studies, relished my favourite authors, &c. without probably entailing on me, at the same time, expensive living, fantastic caprice, perhaps apish affectation, with all the other blessed boarding-school acquirements, which (*pardonnez moi, Madame*) are sometimes to be found among females of the upper ranks, but almost universally pervade the misses of the would-be-gentry.

. . . . . .

I like your way in your church-yard lucubrations. Thoughts that are the spontaneous result of accidental situations, either respecting health, place, or company, have often a strength, and always an originality, that would in vain be looked for in fancied circumstances and studied paragraphs. For me, I have often thought of keeping a letter, *in progression*, by me, to send you when the sheet was written out. Now I talk of sheets, I must tell you, my reason for writing to you on paper of this kind, is my pruriency of writing to you at large. A page of post is on such a dissocial, narrow-minded scale, that I cannot abide it; and double letters, at least in my miscellaneous reverie manner, are a monstrous tax in a close correspondence.

No. XCII.

TO THE SAME.

Ellisland, 16*th August*, 1788.

I AM in a fine disposition, my honoured friend, so send you an elegiac epistle; and want only genius to make it quite Shenstonian.

"Why droops my heart with fancied woes forlorn?
Why sinks my soul beneath each wintry sky?"

. . . . . .

My increasing cares in this, as yet, strange country—gloomy conjectures in the dark vista of futurity—consciousness of my own inability for the struggle of the world—my broadened mark to misfortune in a wife and children:—I could indulge these reflections, till my humour should ferment into the most acrid chagrin, that would corrode the very thread of life.

To counterwork these baneful feelings, I have sat down to write to you; as I declare upon my soul I always find that the most sovereign balm for my wounded spirit.

I was yesterday at Mr. ——'s to dinner, for the first time. My reception was quite to my mind; from the lady of the house quite flattering. She sometimes hits on a couplet or two, *impromptu*. She repeated one or two to the admiration of all present. My suffrage as a professional man was expected: I for once went agonizing over the belly of my conscience. Pardon me, ye, my adored household gods, Independence of Spirit, and Integrity of Soul! In the course of conversation, *Johnson's Musical Museum*, a collection of Scottish songs with the music, was talked of. We got a song on the harpsichord, beginning,

"Raving winds around her blowing."

The air was much admired: the lady of the house asked me whose were the words—"Mine, Madam—they are indeed my very best verses:" she took not the smallest notice of them! The old Scottish proverb says, well, "king's caff is better than ither folks' corn." I was going to make a New Testament quotation about "casting pearls;" but that would be too virulent, for the lady is actually a woman of sense and taste.

. . . . . .

After all that has been said on the other side of the question, man is by no means a happy creature. I do not speak of the selected few, favoured by partial heaven, whose souls are tuned to gladness amid riches and honours, and prudence and wisdom—I speak of the neglected many, whose nerves, whose sinews, whose days are sold to the minions of fortune.

If I thought you had never seen it, I would

transcribe for you a stanza of an old Scottish ballad, called *The Life and Age of Man*, beginning thus,

"'Twas in the sixteenth hunder year
Of God and fifty three,
Frae Christ was born, that bought us dear,
As writings testifie."

I had an old grand-uncle, with whom my mother lived a while in her girlish years; the good old man, for such he was, was long blind ere he died, during which time, his highest enjoyment was to sit down and cry, while my mother would sing the simple old song of *The life and Age of Man*.

It is this way of thinking—it is those melancholy truths, that make religion so precious to the poor, miserable children of men—If it is a mere phantom, existing only in the heated imagination of enthusiasm,

"What truth on earth so precious as the lie!"

My idle reasonings sometimes make me a little sceptical, but the necessities of my heart always give the cold philosophizings the lie. Who looks for the heart weaned from earth; the soul affianced to her God; the correspondence fixed with heaven; the pious supplication and devout thanksgiving, constant as the vicissitudes of even and morn; who thinks to meet with these in the court, the palace, in the glare of public life? No: to find them in their precious importance and divine efficacy, we must search among the obscure recesses of disappointment, affliction, poverty, and distress.

I am sure, dear Madam, you are now *more* than pleased with the *length* of my letters. I return to Ayrshire, middle of next week: and it quickens my pace to think that there will be a letter from you waiting me there. I must be here again very soon for my harvest.

No. XCIII.

TO R. GRAHAM, OF FINTRY, Esq.

SIR,

When I had the honour of being introduced to you at Athole-house, I did not think so soon of asking a favour of you. When Lear, in Shakspeare, asks old Kent, why he wished to be in his service, he answers, "Because you have that in your face which I could like to call master." For some such reason, Sir, do I now solicit your patronage. You know, I dare say, of an application I lately made to your Board to be admitted an officer of excise. I have, according to form, been examined by a supervisor, and to-day I gave in his certificate, with a request for an order for instructions. In this affair, if I succeed, I am afraid I shall but too much need a patronizing friend. Propriety of conduct as a man, and fidelity and attention as an officer, I dare engage for; but with any thing like business, except manual labour, I am totally unacquainted.

. . . . . .

I had intended to have closed my late appearance on the stage of life, in the character of a country farmer; but after discharging some filial and fraternal claims, I find I could only fight for existence in that miserable manner, which I have lived to see throw a venerable parent into the jaws of a jail; whence death, the poor man's last and often best friend, rescued him.

I know, Sir, that to need your goodness is to have a claim on it; may I therefore beg your patronage to forward me in this affair, till I be appointed to a division, where, by the help of rigid economy, I will try to support that independence so dear to my soul, but which has been too often so distant from my situation.

. . . . . .

When nature her great master-piece designed,
And fram'd her last, best work, the human mind,
Her eye intent on all the mazy plan,
She form'd of various parts the various man.

Then first she calls the useful many forth;
Plain plodding industry, and sober worth;
Thence peasants, farmers, native sons of earth,
And merchandise' whole genus take their birth:
Each prudent cit a warm existence finds,
And all mechanics' many-aproned kinds.
Some other rarer sorts are wanted yet,
The lead and buoy are needful to the net:
The *caput mortuum* of gross desires
Makes a material, for mere knights and squires;
The martial phosphorus is taught to flow,
She kneads the lumpish philosophic dough,
Then marks th' unyielding mass with grave designs,
Law, physics, politics, and deep divines:
Last, she sublimes th' Aurora of the poles,
The flashing elements of female souls.

The order'd system fair before her stood,
Nature well pleased pronounced it very good;
But ere she gave creating labour o'er,
Half-jest, she tried one curious labour more.
Some spumy, fiery, *ignis fatuus* matter;
Such as the slightest breath of air might scatter;
With arch alacrity and conscious glee
(Nature may have her whim as well as we,
Her Hogarth-art perhaps she meant to show it)
She forms the thing, and christens it—a poet.
Creature, tho' oft the prey of care and sorrow,
When bless'd to-day unmindful of to-morrow.
A being form'd t'amuse his graver friends,
Admired and praised—and there the homage ends:

A mortal quite unfit for fortune's strife,
Yet oft the sport of all the ills of life;
Prone to enjoy each pleasure riches give,
Yet haply wanting wherewithal to live:
Longing to wipe each tear, to heal each groan,
Yet frequent all unheeded in his own.

But honest Nature is not quite a Turk,
She laugh'd at first, then felt for her poor work.
Pitying the propless climber of mankind,
She cast about a *standard tree* to find;
And to support his helpless woodbine state,
Attach'd him to the *generous truly great*.
A title, and the only one I claim,
To lay strong hold for help on bounteous Graham.

Pity the tuneful muses' hapless train,
Weak, timid landmen on life's stormy main!
Their hearts no selfish stern absorbent stuff,
That never gives—tho' humbly takes enough;
The little fate allows, they share as soon,
Unlike sage, proverb'd, wisdom's hard-wrung boon.
The world were bless'd, did bless on them depend,
Ah, that "the friendly e'er should want a friend!"
Let prudence number o'er each sturdy son,
Who life and wisdom at one race begun,
Who feel by reason, and who give by rule,
(Instinct's a brute, and sentiment a fool!)
Who make poor *will do* wait upon *I should*—
We own they're prudent, but who feels their good?
Ye wise ones, hence! ye hurt the social eye!
God's image rudely etch'd on base alloy!
But come ye who the godlike pleasure know,
Heaven's attribute distinguish'd—to bestow!
Whose arms of love would grasp the human race:
Come *thou* who giv'st with all a courtier's grace;
Friend of my life, true patron of my rhymes!
Prop of my dearest hopes for future times.
Why shrinks my soul half blushing, half afraid,
Backward, abash'd to ask thy friendly aid?
I know my need, I know thy giving hand,
I crave thy friendship at thy kind command;
But there are such who court the tuneful nine—
Heavens, should the branded character be mine!
Whose verse in manhood's pride sublimely flows,
Yet vilest reptiles in their begging prose.
Mark, how their lofty independent spirit,
Soars on the spurning wing of injured merit!
Seek not the proofs in private life to find;
Pity, the best of words, should be but wind!
So, to heaven's gates the lark-shrill song ascends,
But grovelling on the earth the carol ends.
In all the clam'rous cry of starving want,
They dun benevolence with shameless front;
Oblige them, patronize their tinsel lays,
They persecute you all your future days!
Ere my poor soul such deep damnation stain,
My horny fist assume the plough again;
The pie-ball'd jacket let me patch once more;
On eighteen pence a-week I've lived before.
Though, thanks to heaven, I dare even that last shift,
I trust, meantime, my boon is in thy gift:
That placed by thee, upon the wish'd-for height,
Where, man and nature fairer in her sight,
My muse may imp her wing for some sublimer flight.*

No. XCIV.

TO MR. BEUGO, ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

MY DEAR SIR, *Ellisland, Sept.* 9, 1788.

THERE is not in Edinburgh above the number of the graces whose letters would have given me so much pleasure as yours of the 3d instant, which only reached me yesternight.

I am here on my farm, busy with my harvest; but for all that most pleasurable part of life called SOCIAL COMMUNICATION, I am here at the very elbow of existence. The only things that are to be found in this country in any degree of perfection, are stupidity and canting. Prose, they only know in graces, prayers, &c. and the value of these they estimate as they do their plaiding webs—by the ell! As for the muses, they have as much an idea of a rhinoceros as of a poet. For my old capricious but good-natured hussy of a muse—

By banks of Nith I sat and wept
When Coila I thought on,
In midst thereof I hung my harp
The willow trees upon.

I am generally about half my time in Ayrshire with my "darling Jean," and then I, at *lucid intervals*, throw my horny fist across my be-cobwebbed lyre, much in the same manner as an old wife throws her hand across the spokes of her spinning wheel.

I well send you "The Fortunate Shepherdess" as soon as I return to Ayrshire, for there I keep it with other precious treasure. I shall send it by a careful hand, as I would not for any thing it should be mislaid or lost. I do not wish to serve you from any benevolence, or other grave Christian virtue; 'tis purely a selfish gratification of my own feelings whenever I think of you.

. . . . . .

If your better functions would give you leisure to write me I should be extremely happy; that is to say, if you neither keep nor look for a

* This is our poet's first epistle to Graham of Fintry. It is not equal to the second, but it contains too much of the characteristic vigour of its author to be suppressed. A little more knowledge of natural history or of chemistry was wanted to enable him to execute the original conception correctly.

regular correspondence. I hate the idea of being *obliged* to write a letter. I sometimes write a friend twice a week, at other times once a quarter.

I am exceedingly pleased with your fancy in making the author you mention place a map of Iceland instead of his portrait before his works: 'Twas a glorious idea.

Could you conveniently do me one thing—Whenever you finish any head I could like to have a proof copy of it. I might tell you a long story about your fine genius; but as what every body knows cannot have escaped you, I shall not say one syllable about it.

No. XCV.

TO MISS CHALMERS, EDINBURGH.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, Sept. 16, 1788.

WHERE are you? and how are you? and is Lady M'Kenzie recovering her health? for I have had but one solitary letter from you. I will not think you have forgot me, Madam; and for my part—

> "When thee Jerusalem I forget,
> Skill part from my right hand!"

"My heart is not of that rock, nor my soul careless as that sea." I do not make my progress among mankind as a bowl does among its fellows—rolling through the crowd without bearing away any mark or impression, except where they hit in hostile collision.

I am here, driven in with my harvest-folks by bad weather; and as you and your sister once did me the honour of interesting yourselves much *a l'egard de moi*, I sit down to beg the continuation of your goodness.—I can truly say that, all the exterior of life apart, I never saw two, whose esteem flattered the nobler feelings of my soul—I will not say, more, but, so much as Lady M'Kenzie and Miss Chalmers. When I think of you—hearts the best, minds the noblest, of human kind—unfortunate, even in the shades of life—when I think I have met with you, and have lived more of real life with you in eight days, than I can do with almost any body I meet with in eight years—when I think on the improbability of meeting you in this world again—I could sit down and cry like a child!—If ever you honoured me with a place in your esteem, I trust I can now plead more desert.—I am secure against that crushing grip of iron poverty, which, alas! is less or more fatal to the native worth and purity of, I fear, the noblest souls; and a late, important step in my life has kindly taken me out of the way of those ungrateful iniquities, which, however overlooked in fashionable license, or varnished in fashionable phrase, are indeed but lighter and deeper shades of VILLAINY.

Shortly after my last return to Ayrshire, I married "my Jean." This was not in consequence of the attachment of romance perhaps; but I had a long and much-loved fellow-creature's happiness or misery in my determination, and I durst not trifle with so important a deposit. Nor have I any cause to repent it. If I have not got polite tattle, modish manners, and fashionable dress, I am not sickened and disgusted with the multiform curse of boarding-school affectation; and I have got the handsomest figure, the sweetest temper, the soundest constitution, and the kindest heart in the county. Mrs. Burns believes, as firmly as her creed, that I am *le plus bel esprit, et le plus honnete homme* in the universe; although she scarcely ever in her life, except the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, and the Psalms of David in metre, spent five minutes together on either prose or verse. I must except also from this last, a certain late publication of Scots poems, which she has perused very devoutly; and all the ballads in the country, as she has (O the partial lover! you will cry) the finest "woodnote wild" I ever heard.—I am the more particular in this lady's character, as I know she will henceforth have the honour of a share in your best wishes. She is still at Mauchline, as I am building my house; for this hovel that I shelter in, while occasionally here, is pervious to every blast that blows, and every shower that falls; and I am only preserved from being chilled to death, by being suffocated with smoke. I do not find my farm that pennyworth I was taught to expect, but I believe, in time, it may be a saving bargain. You will be pleased to hear that I have laid aside idle *eclat*, and bind every day after my reapers.

To save me from that horrid situation of at any time going down, in a losing bargain of a farm, to misery, I have taken my excise instructions, and have my commission in my pocket for any emergency of fortune. If I could set *all* before your view, whatever disrespect you in common with the world, have for this business, I know you would approve of my idea.

I will make no apology, dear Madam, for this egotistic detail: I know you and your sister will be interested in every circumstance of it. What signify the silly, idle gewgaws of wealth, or the ideal trumpery of greatness! When fellow partakers of the same nature fear the same God, have the same benevolence of heart, the same nobleness of soul, the same detestation at every thing dishonest, and the same scorn at every thing unworthy—if they are not in the dependance of absolute beggary, in the name of common sense are they not EQUALS? And if the bias, the instinctive bias of their souls run the same way, why may they not be FRIENDS?

When I may have an opportunity of sending you this, Heaven only knows. Shenstone says, "When one is confined idle within doors by bad

weather, the best antidote against *ennui* is, to read the letters of, or write to one's friends;" in that case then, if the weather continues thus, I may scrawl you half a quire.

I very lately, to wit, since harvest began, wrote a poem, not in imitation, but in the manner of Pope's Moral Epistles. It is only a short essay, just to try the strength of my Muse's pinion in that way. I will send you a copy of it, when once I have heard from you. I have likewise been laying the foundation of some pretty large poetic works: how the superstructure will come on I leave to that great maker and marrer of projects—TIME. Johnson's collection of Scots songs is going on in the third volume; and of consequence finds me a consumpt for a great deal of idle metre.—One of the most tolerable things I have done in that way, is, two stanzas that I made to an air, a musical gentleman * of my acquaintance composed for the anniversary of his wedding-day, which happens on the seventh of November. Take it as follows:

The day returns—my bosom burns,
The blissful day we twa did meet, &c.—P. 29.

I shall give over this letter for shame. If I should be seized with a scribbling fit, before this goes away, I shall make it another letter; and then you may allow your patience a week's respite between the two. I have not room for more than the old, kind, hearty, FAREWELL!

To make some amends, *mes cheres Mesdames*, for dragging you on to this second sheet; and to relieve a little the tiresomeness of my unstudied and uncorrectible prose, I shall transcribe you some of my late poetic bagatelles; though I have, these eight or ten months, done very little that way. One day, in an hermitage on the banks of Nith, belonging to a gentleman in my neighbourhood, who is so good as give me a key at pleasure, I wrote as follows; supposing myself the sequestered, venerable inhabitant of the lonely mansion.

(*Lines written in Friar's Carse Hermitage.*†)

No. XCVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP, OF DUNLOP.

Mauchline, 27th Sept. 1788.

I HAVE received twins, dear Madam, more than once; but scarcely ever with more pleasure than when I received yours of the 12th instant. To make myself understood; I had wrote to Mr. Graham, enclosing my poem addressed to him, and the same post which favoured me with yours, brought me an answer from him. It was dated the very day he had received mine; and I am quite at a loss to say whether it was most polite or kind.

Your criticisms, my honoured benefactress, are truly the work of a *friend*. They are not the blasting depredations of a canker-toothed, caterpillar critic; nor are they the fair statement of cold impartiality, balancing with unfeeling exactitude, the pro and con of an author's merits; they are the judicious observations of animated friendship, selecting the beauties of the piece. I have just arrived from Nithsdale, and will be here a fortnight. I was on horseback this morning by three o'clock; for between my wife and my farm is just forty-six miles. As I jogged on in the dark, I was taken with a poetic fit, as follows:

"Mrs. F—— of C——'s lamentation for the death of her son; an uncommonly promising youth of eighteen or nineteen years of age."

(*Here follow the verses, entitled, "A Mother's Lament for the Loss of her Son."*)

You will not send me your poetic rambles, but, you see, I am no niggard of mine. I am sure your impromptu's give me double pleasure; what falls from your pen, can neither be uncntertaining in itself, nor indifferent to me.

The *one* fault you found, is just; but I cannot please myself in an emendation.

What a life of solicitude is the life of a parent! You interested me much in your young couple.

I would not take my folio paper for this epistle, and now I repent it. I am so jaded with my dirty long journey that I was afraid to drawl into the essence of dulness with any thing larger than a quarto, and so I must leave out another rhyme of this morning's manufacture.

I will pay the sapientipotent George most cheerfully, to hear from you ere I leave Ayrshire.

No. XCVII.

TO MR. P. HILL.

Mauchline, 1st October, 1788.

I HAVE been here in this country about three days, and all that time my chief reading has been the "Address to Loch Lomond," you were so obliging as to send to me. Were I impannelled one of the author's jury, to determine his criminality respecting the sin of poesy, my verdict should be "guilty! A poet of Nature's

* Captain Riddel of Glenriddel.

† The poetic temperament is ever predisposed to sensations of the "horrible and awful." Burns, in returning from his visits at Glenriddel to his farm at Ellisland, had to pass through a little wild wood in which stood the Hermitage. When the night was dark and dreary it was his custom generally to solicit an additional parting glass to fortify his spirits and keep up his courage. This was related by a lady, a near relation of Captain Riddel's, who had frequent opportunities of seeing this salutary practice exemplified.

making!" It is an excellent method for improvement, and what I believe every poet does, to place some favourite classic author, in his own walks of study and composition, before him, as a model. Though your author had not mentioned the name, I could have, at half a glance, guessed his model to be Thomson. Will my brother poet forgive me, if I venture to hint, that his imitation of that immortal bard, is in two or three places rather more servile than such a genius as his required.—e. g.

To soothe the madding passions all to peace,
ADDRESS.

To soothe the throb'ing passions into peace,
THOMSON.

I think the *Address* is, in simplicity, harmony, and elegance of versification, fully equal to the *Seasons*. Like Thomson, too, he has looked into nature for himself: you meet with no copied description. One particular criticism I made at first reading: in no one instance has he said too much. He never flags in his progress, but like a true poet of Nature's making, kindles in his course. His beginning is simple, and modest, as if distrustful of the strength of his pinion; only, I do not altogether like

"Truth,
The soul of every song that's nobly great."

Fiction is the soul of many a song that is nobly great. Perhaps I am wrong: this may be but a prose criticism. Is not the phrase, in *line 7, page 6*, "Great lake," too much vulgarized by every-day language, for so sublime a poem?

"Great mass of waters, theme for nobler song,"

is perhaps no emendation. His enumeration of a comparison with other lakes, is at once harmonious and poetic. Every reader's ideas must sweep the

"Winding margin of an hundred miles."

The perspective that follows mountains blue—the imprisoned billows beating in vain—the wooded isles—the digression on the yew-tree—"Ben Lomond's lofty cloud-enveloped head," &c. are beautiful. A thunder-storm is a subject which has been often tried, yet our poet, in his grand picture, has interjected a circumstance, so far as I know, entirely original:

"The gloom
Deep seam'd with frequent streaks of moving fire."

In his preface to the storm, "the glens how dark between," is noble highland landscape! The "rain plowing the red mould," too, is beautifully fancied. Ben Lomond's "lofty, pathless top," is a good expression; and the surrounding view from it is truly great; the

"Silver mist,
Beneath the beaming sun,"

is well described; and here, he has contrived to enliven his poem with a little of that passion which bids fair, I think, to usurp the modern muses altogether. I know not how far this episode is a beauty upon the whole, but the swain's wish to carry "some faint idea of the vision bright," to entertain her "partial listening ear," is a pretty thought. But, in my opinion, the most beautiful passages in the whole poem, are the fowls crowding, in wintry frosts, to Loch Lomond's "hospitable flood;" their wheeling round, their lighting, mixing, diving, &c. and the glorious description of the sportsman. This last is equal to any thing in the *Seasons*. The idea of "the floating tribes distant seem, far glistering to the moon," provoking his eye as he is obliged to leave them, is a noble ray of poetic genius. "The howling winds," the "hideous roar" of "the white cascades," are all in the same style.

I forget that while I am thus holding forth, with the heedless warmth of an enthusiast, I am perhaps tiring you with nonsense. I must, however, mention, that the last verse of the sixteenth page is one of the most elegant compliments I have ever seen. I must likewise notice that beautiful paragraph, beginning, "The gleaming lake," &c. I dare not go into the particular beauties of the two last paragraphs, but they are admirably fine, and truly Ossianic.

I must beg your pardon for this lengthened scrawl. I had no idea of it when I began—I should like to know who the author is; but, whoever he be, please present him with my grateful thanks for the entertainment he has afforded me. *

A friend of mine desired me to commission for him two books, *Letters on the Religion essential to Man*, a book you sent me before; and, *The World Unmasked, or the Philosopher the greatest Cheat*. Send me them by the first opportunity. The *Bible* you sent me is truly elegant; I only wish it had been in two volumes.

No. XCVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP, AT MOREHAM MAINS.

MADAM, *Mauchline, 13th Nov.* 1788.

I HAD the very great pleasure of dining at Dunlop yesterday. Men are said to flatter wo-

* The poem entitled *An Address to Loch Lomond*, is said to be written by a gentleman, now one of the masters of the High School at Edinburgh, and the same who translated the beautiful story of the *Paria*, as published in the *Bee* of Dr. Anderson.

men because they are weak; if it is so, poets must be weaker still; for Misses R. and K. and Miss G. M'K, with their flattering attentions, and artful compliments, absolutely turned my head. I own they did not lard me over as many a poet does his patron . . . . but they so intoxicated me with their sly insinuations and delicate inuendos of compliment, that if it had not been for a lucky recollection, how much additional weight and lustre your good opinion and friendship must give me in that circle, I had certainly looked upon myself as a person of no small consequence. I dare not say one word how much I was charmed with the major's friendly welcome, elegant manner, and acute remark, lest I should be thought to balance my orientalisms of applause over against the finest quey * in Ayrshire, which he made a present of to help and adorn my farm-stock. As it was on hallow-day, I am determined annually as that day returns, to decorate her horns with an ode of gratitude to the family of Dunlop.

. . . . . .

So soon as I know of your arrival at Dunlop, I will take the first conveniency to dedicate a day, or perhaps two, to you and friendship, under the guarantee of the major's hospitality. There will soon be threescore and ten miles of permanent distance between us; and now that your friendship and friendly correspondence is entwisted with the heart-strings of my enjoyment of life, I must indulge myself in a happy day of "the feast of reason and the flow of soul."

No. XCIX.

TO ——————

SIR, *November* 8, 1788.

NOTWITHSTANDING the opprobrious epithets with which some of our philosophers and gloomy sectaries have branded our nature—the principle of universal selfishness, the proneness to all evil, they have given us; still, the detestation in which inhumanity to the distressed, or insolence to the fallen, are held by all mankind, shows that they are not natives of the human heart.—Even the unhappy partner of our kind, who is undone—the bitter consequence of his follies or his crimes—who but sympathises with the miseries of this ruined profligate brother? we forget the injuries, and feel for the man.

I went last Wednesday to my parish church, most cordially to join in grateful acknowledgements to the AUTHOR OF ALL GOOD, for the consequent blessings of the glorious revolution. To that auspicious event we owe no less than our liberties civil and religious; to it we are likewise indebted for the present Royal Family, the ruling features of whose administration have ever been, mildness to the subject, and tenderness of his rights.

Bred and educated in revolution principles, the principles of reason and common sense, it could not be any silly political prejudice which made my heart revolt at the harsh, abusive manner, in which the reverend gentleman mentioned the House of Stuart, and which I am afraid, was too much the language of the day. We may rejoice sufficiently in our deliverance from past evils, without cruelly raking up the ashes of those, whose misfortune it was, perhaps as much as their crime, to be the authors of those evils; and we may bliss GOD for all his goodness to us as a nation, without, at the same time, cursing a few ruined, powerless exiles, who only harboured ideas, and made attempts, that most of us would have done, had we been in their situation.

"The bloody and tyrannical House of Stuart," may be said with propriety and justice when compared with the present Royal Family, and the sentiments of our days; but is there no allowance to be made for the manners of the times? Were the royal contemporaries of the Stuarts more attentive to their subjects' rights? Might not the epithets of "bloody and tyrannical" be, with at least equal justice, applied to the House of Tudor, of York, or any other of their predecessors?

The simple state of the case, Sir, seems to be this—At that period, the science of government, the knowledge of the true relation between king and subject, was, like other sciences and other knowledge, just in its infancy, emerging from dark ages of ignorance and barbarity.

The Stuarts only contended for prerogatives which they knew their predecessors enjoyed, and which they saw their contemporaries enjoying; but these prerogatives were inimical to the happiness of a nation, and the rights of subjects.

In this contest between prince and people, the consequence of that light of science, which had lately dawned over Europe, the monarch of France, for example, was victorious over the struggling liberties of his people: with us, luckily the monarch failed, and his unwarrantable pretensions fell a sacrifice to our rights and happiness. Whether it was owing to the wisdom of leading individuals, or to the justling of parties, I cannot pretend to determine; but likewise, happily for us, the kingly power was shifted into another branch of the family, who, as they owed the throne solely to the call of a free people, could claim nothing inconsistent with the covenanted terms which placed them there.

The Stuarts have been condemned and laughed at for the folly and impracticability of their attempts in 1715 and 1745. That they failed, I bless GOD; but cannot join in the ridicule against them. Who does not know that the abilities or defects of leaders and commanders are often hidden until put to the touchstone of exigency; and that there is a caprice of fortune,

† Heifer.

an omnipotence in particular accidents and conjunctures of circumstances, which exalt us as heroes, or brand us as madmen, just as they are for or against us?

Man, Mr. Publisher, is a strange, weak, inconsistent being. Who would believe, Sir, that, in this our Augustan age of liberality and refinement, while we seem so justly sensible and jealous of our rights and liberties, and animated with such indignation against the very memory of those who would have subverted them—that a certain people, under our national protection, should complain not against our monarch and a few favourite advisers, but against our WHOLE LEGISLATIVE BODY, for similar oppression, and almost in the very same terms, as our forefathers did of the House of Stuart! I will not, I cannot enter into the merits of the cause, but I dare say the American Congress, in 1776, will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us, as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed House of Stuart.

To conclude, Sir; let every man who has a tear for the many miseries incident to humanity, feel for a family illustrious as any in Europe, and unfortunate beyond historic precedent; and let every Briton (and particularly every Scotsman), who ever looked with reverential pity on the dotage of a parent, cast a veil over the fatal mistakes of the kings of his forefathers. *

No. C.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON, ENGRAVER, EDINBURGH.

Mauchline, Nov. 15, 1788.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE sent you two more songs.—If you have got any tunes, or any thing to correct, please send them by return of the carrier.

I can easily see, my dear friend, that you will very probably have four volumes. Perhaps you may not find your account *lucratively*, in this business; but you are a patriot for the music of your country; and I am certain, posterity will look on themselves as highly indebted to your public spirit. Be not in a hurry; let us go on correctly; and your name shall be immortal.

I am preparing a flaming preface for your third volume. I see every day, new musical publications advertised; but what are they? Gaudy, hunted butterflies of a day, and then vanish for ever: but your work will outlive the momentary neglects of idle fashion, and defy the teeth of time.

Have you never a fair goddess that leads you a wild-goose chase of amorous devotion? Let me know a few of her qualities, such as, whether she be either black, or fair; plump, or thin; short, or tall, &c.; and choose your air, and I shall task my Muse to celebrate her.

No. CI.

TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

Mauchline, Nov. 15, 1788.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

As I hear nothing of your motions but that you are, or were, out of town, I do not know where this may find you, or whether it will find you at all. I wrote you a long letter, dated from the land of matrimony, in June; but either it had not found you, or, what I dread more, it found you or Mrs. Blacklock in too precarious a state of health and spirits, to take notice of an idle packet.

I have done many little things for Johnson, since I had the pleasure of seeing you; and I have finished one piece, in the way of Pope's *Moral Epistles;* but from your silence, I have every thing to fear, so I have only sent you two melancholy things, which I tremble lest they should too well suit the tone of your present feelings.

In a fortnight I move, bag and baggage, to Nithsdale; till then, my direction is at this place; after that period, it will be at Ellisland, near Dumfries. It would extremely oblige me were it but half a line, to let me know how you are, and where you are.—Can I be indifferent to the fate of a man, to whom I owe so much? A man whom I not only esteem but venerate.

My warmest good wishes and most respectful compliments to Mrs. Blacklock, and Miss Johnston, if she is with you.

I cannot conclude without telling you that I am more and more pleased with the step I took respecting "my Jean."—Two things, from my happy experience, I set down as apothegms in life. A wife's head is immaterial, compared with her heart—and—"Virtue's (for wisdom what poet pretends to it)—ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace."

Adieu!

. . . . . .

(Here follow "*The mother's lament for the loss of her son,*" *p.* 200, and the song beginning, "*The lazy mist hangs from the brow of the hill,*" *p.* 234.)

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* This letter was sent to the publisher of the *Edinburgh Evening Courant.*

No. CII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 17th December, 1788.

MY DEAR HONOURED FRIEND,

YOURS, dated Edinburgh, which I have just read, makes me very unhappy. Almost " blind and wholly deaf," are melancholy news of human nature; but when told of a much loved and honoured friend, they carry misery in the sound. Goodness on your part, and gratitude on mine, began a tie, which has gradually and strongly entwisted itself among the dearest chords of my bosom; and I tremble at the omens of your late and present ailing habits and shattered health. You miscalculate matters widely, when you forbid my waiting on you, lest it should hurt my worldly concerns. My small scale of farming is exceedingly more simple and easy than what you have lately seen at Morcham Mains. But be that as it may, the heart of the man, and the fancy of the poet, are the two grand considerations for which I live: if miry ridges, and dirty dunghills are to engross the best part of the functions of my soul immortal, I had better been a rook or a magpie at once, and then I should not have been plagued with any ideas superior to breaking of clods, and picking up grubs; not to mention barn-door cocks or mallards, creatures with which I could almost exchange lives at any time.—If you continue so deaf, I am afraid a visit will be no great pleasure to either of us; but if I hear you are got so well again as to be able to relish conversation, look you to it, Madam, for I will make my threatenings good: I am to be at the new-year-day fair of Ayr, and by all that is sacred in the world, friend, I will come and see you.

. . . . . .

Your meeting, which you so well describe, with your old schoolfellow and friend, was truly interesting. Out upon the ways of the world! —They spoil these " social offsprings of the heart." Two veterans of the " men of the world" would have met, with little more heart-workings than two old hacks worn out on the road. Apropos, is not the Scotch phrase, " Auld lang syne," exceedingly expressive. There is an old song and tune which has often thrilled through my soul. You know I am an enthusiast in old Scotch songs. I shall give you the verses on the other sheet, as I suppose Mr. Ker will save you the postage.*

Light be the turf on the breast of the Heaven-inspired poet who composed this glorious fragment! There is more of the fire of native genius in it, than in half a dozen of modern English Bucchanalians. Now I am on my hobby horse, I cannot help inserting two other old stanzas, which please me mightily.

Go fetch to me a pint o' wine,
An' fill it in a silver tassie.

(*See Songs p.* 212.)

* Here follows the song of *Auld lang syne.*

No. CIII.

TO A YOUNG LADY,

WHO HAD HEARD HE HAD BEEN MAKING A BALLAD ON HER, ENCLOSING THAT BALLAD.

MADAM, *December,* 1788.

I UNDERSTAND my very worthy neighbour, Mr. Riddel, has informed you that I have made you the subject of some verses. There is something so provoking in the idea of being the burden of a ballad, that I do not think Job or Moses, though such patterns of patience and meekness, could have resisted the curiosity to know what that ballad was: so my worthy friend has done me a mischief, which I dare say he never intended; and reduced me to the unfortunate alternative of leaving your curiosity ungratified, or else disgusting you with foolish verses, the unfinished production of a random moment, and never meant to have met your ear. I have heard or read somewhere of a gentleman, who had some genius, much eccentricity, and very considerable dexterity with his pencil. In the accidental groups of life into which one is thrown, wherever this gentleman met with a character in a more than ordinary degree congenial to his heart, he used to steal a sketch of the face, merely, he said, as a *nota bene* to point out the agreeable recollection to his memory. What this gentleman's pencil was to him, is my muse to me; and the verses I do myself the honour to send you are a *memento* exactly of the same kind that he indulged in.

It may be more owing to the fastidiousness of my caprice, than the delicacy of my taste, that I am so often tired, disgusted, and hurt with the insipidity, affectation, and pride of mankind, that when I meet with a person " after my own heart," I positively feel what an orthodox protestant would call a species of idolatry which acts on my fancy like inspiration, and I can no more desist rhyming on the impulse, than an Æolian harp can refuse its tones to the streaming air. A distich or two would be the consequence, though the object which hit my fancy were grey-bearded age; but where my theme is youth and beauty, a young lady whose personal charms, wit, and sentiment, are equally striking and unaffected, by heavens! though I had lived threescore years a married man, and threescore years before I was a married man, my imagination would hallow the very idea; and I am truly sorry that the enclosed stanzas have done such poor justice to such a subject.

No. CIV.

TO SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD.

SIR, *December*, 1788.

MR. M'KENZIE, in Mauchline, my very warm and worthy friend, has informed me how much you are pleased to interest yourself in my fate as a man, and, (what to me is incomparably dearer) my fame as a poet. I have, Sir, in one or two instances, been patronized by those of your character in life, when I was introduced to their notice by ———— friends to them, and honoured acquaintances to me: but you are the first gentleman in the country whose benevolence and goodness of heart has interested him for me, unsolicited and unknown. I am not master enough of the etiquette of these matters to know, nor did I stay to inquire, whether formal duty bade, or cold propriety disallowed, my thanking you in this manner, as I am convinced, from the light in which you kindly view me, that you will do me the justice to believe this letter is not the manœuvre of a needy, sharping author, fastening on those in upper life, who honour him with a little notice of him or his works. Indeed the situation of poets is generally such, to a proverb, as may, in some measure, palliate that prostitution of heart and talents they have at times been guilty of. I do not think prodigality is, by an means, a necessary concomitant of a poetic turn, but believe a careless, indolent inattention to economy, is almost inseparable from it; then there must be in the heart of every bard of Nature's making, a certain modest sensibility, mixed with a kind of pride, that will ever keep him out of the way of those windfalls of fortune, which frequently light on hardy impudence and foot-licking servility. It is not easy to imagine a more helpless state than his, whose poetic fancy unfits him for the world, and whose character as a scholar, gives him some pretensions to the *politesse* of life—yet is as poor as I am.

For my part, I thank Heaven, my star has been kinder; learning never elevated my ideas above the peasant's shed, and I have an independent fortune at the plough-tail.

I was surprised to hear that any one, who pretended in the least to the *manners of the gentleman*, should be so foolish, or worse, as to stoop to traduce the morals of such a one as I am, and so inhumanly cruel, too, as to meddle with that late most unfortunate, unhappy part of my story. With a tear of gratitude, I thank you, Sir, for the warmth with which you interposed in behalf of my conduct. I am, I acknowledge, too frequently the sport of whim, caprice, and passion—but reverence to God, and integrity to my fellow-creatures, I hope I shall ever preserve. I have no return, Sir, to make you for your goodness but one—a return which, I am persuaded, will not be unacceptable—the honest, warm wishes of a grateful heart for your happiness, and every one of that lovely flock, who stand to you in a filial relation. If ever calumny aim the poisoned shaft at them, may friendship be by to ward the blow!

LETTERS, 1789.

No. CV.

FROM MR. G. BURNS.

DEAR BROTHER, *Mossgiel, 1st Jan.* 1789.

I HAVE just finished my new-year's-day breakfast in the usual form, which naturally makes me call to mind the days of former years, and the society in which we used to begin them; and when I look at our family vicissitudes, "through the dark postern of time long elapsed," I cannot help remarking to you, my dear brother, how good the GOD of SEASONS is to us; and that however some clouds may seem to lower over the portion of time before us, we have great reason to hope that all will turn out well.

Your mother and sisters, with Robert the second, join me in the compliments of the season to you and Mrs. Burns, and beg you will remember us in the same manner to William, the first time you see him.

I am, dear brother, yours,
GILBERT BURNS.

No. CVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, New-Year-Day Morning, 1789.

THIS, dear Madam, is a morning of wishes, and would to GOD that I came under the apostle James's description!—*the prayer of a righteous man availeth much.* In that case, Madam, you should welcome in a year full of blessings; every thing that obstructs or disturbs tranquillity and self-enjoyment, should be removed, and every pleasure that frail humanity can taste, should be yours. I own myself so little a Presbyterian, that I approve of set times and seasons of more than ordinary acts of devotion, for breaking in on that habituated routine of life and thought, which is so apt to reduce our existence to a kind of instinct, or even sometimes, and with some minds, to a state very little superior to mere machinery.

This day; the first Sunday of May; a breezy, blue-skyed noon some time about the beginning, and a hoary morning and calm sunny day about the end, of autumn; these, time out of mind, have been with me a kind of holiday.

. . . . . .

I believe I owe this to that glorious paper in the Spectator, "The Vision of Mirza;" a piece that struck my young fancy before I was capable of fixing an idea to a word of three syllables: "On the 5th day of the moon, which, according to the custom of my forefathers, I always *keep holy*, after having washed myself, and offered up my morning devotions, I ascended the high hill of Bagdat, in order to pass the rest of the day in meditation and prayer."

We know nothing, or next to nothing, of the substance or structure of our souls, so cannot account for those seeming caprices, in them, that one should be particularly pleased with this thing, or struck with that, which, on minds of a different cast, makes no extraordinary impression. I have some favourite flowers in spring, among which are the mountain daisy, the hare-bell, the fox-glove, the wild-brier rose, the budding birch, and the hoary hawthorn, that I view and hang over with particular delight. I never hear the loud, solitary whistle of the curlew, in a summer noon, or the wild mixing cadence of a troop of grey plover, in an autumnal morning, without feeling an elevation of soul like the enthusiasm of devotion or poetry. Tell me, my dear friend, to what can this be owing? Are we a piece of machinery, which, like the Æolian harp, passive, takes the impression of the passing accident? Or do these workings argue something within us above the trodden clod? I own myself partial to such proofs of those awful and important realities—a God that made all things—man's immaterial and immortal nature—and a world of weal or woe beyond death and the grave.

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No. CVII.

FROM THE REV. P. CARFRAE.

SIR, 2*d January*, 1789.

If you have lately seen Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop, you have certainly heard of the author of the verses which accompany this letter. He was a man highly respectable for every accomplishment and virtue which adorns the character of a man or a Christian. To a great degree of literature, of taste, and poetic genius, was added an invincible modesty of temper, which prevented, in a great degree, his figuring in life, and confined the perfect knowledge of his character and talents to the small circle of his chosen friends. He was untimely taken from us, a few weeks ago, by an inflammatory fever, in the prime of life—beloved by all, who enjoyed his acquaintance, and lamented by all, who have any regard for virtue or genius. There is a woe pronounced in Scripture against the person whom all men speak well of; if ever that woe fell upon the head of mortal man, it fell upon him. He has left behind him a considerable number of compositions, chiefly poetical; sufficient, I imagine, to make a large octavo volume. In particular, two complete and regular tragedies, a farce of three acts, and some smaller poems on different subjects. It falls to my share, who have lived in the most intimate and uninterrupted friendship with him from my youth upwards, to transmit to you the verses he wrote on the publication of your incomparable poems. It is probable they were his last, as they were found in his scrutoire, folded up with the form of a letter addressed to you, and I imagine, were only prevented from being sent by himself, by that melancholy dispensation which we still bemoan. The verses themselves I will not pretend to criticise when writing to a gentleman whom I consider as entirely qualified to judge of their merit. They are the only verses he seems to have attempted in the Scottish style; and I hesitate not to say, in general, that they will bring no dishonour on the Scottish muse;—and allow me to add, that if it is your opinion they are not unworthy of the author, and will be no discredit to you, it is the inclination of Mr. Mylne's friends that they should be immediately published in some periodical work, to give the world a specimen of what may be expected from his performances in the poetic line, which, perhaps, will be afterwards published for the advantage of his family.

. . . . . .

I must beg the favour of a letter from you, acknowledging the receipt of this, and to be allowed to subscribe myself with great regard,

Sir, your most obedient servant,

P. C———.

No. CVIII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 4th Jan. 1789.

SIR,

As often as I think of writing to you, which has been three or four times every week these six months, it gives me something so like the idea of an ordinary-sized statue offering at a conversation with the Rhodian Colossus, that my mind misgives me, and the affair always miscarries somewhere between purpose and resolve. I have, at last, got some business with you, and business-letters are written by the style-book.—I say my business is with you, Sir, for you never had any with me, except the business that benevolence has in the mansion of poverty.

The character and employment of a poet were formerly my pleasure, but are now my pride. I know that a very great deal of my

late eclat was owing to the singularity of my situation, and the honest prejudice of Scotsmen; but still, as I said in the preface to my first edition, I do look upon myself as having some pretensions from Nature to the poetic character. I have not a doubt but the knack, the aptitude, to learn the Muses' trade, is a gift bestowed by Him "who forms the secret bias of the soul;"—but as I firmly believe, that *excellence* in the profession is the fruit of industry, labour, attention, and pains. At least I am resolved to try my doctrine by the test of experience. Another appearance from the press I put off to a very distant day, a day that may never arrive—but poesy I am determined to prosecute with all my vigour. Nature has given very few, if any, of the profession, the talents of shining in every species of composition. I shall try (for until trial it is impossible to know), whether she has qualified me to shine in any one. The worst of it is, by the time one has finished a piece, it has been so often viewed and reviewed before the mental eye, that one loses, in a good measure, the powers of critical discrimination. Here the best criterion I know is a friend—not only of abilities to judge, but with good nature enough, like a prudent teacher with a young learner, to praise perhaps a little more than is exactly just, lest the thin-skinned animal fall into that most deplorable of all poetic diseases—heart-breaking despondency of himself. Dare I, Sir, already immensely indebted to your goodness, ask the additional obligation of your being that friend to me? I enclose you an essay of mine, in a walk of poesy to me entirely new; I mean the epistle addressed to R. G., Esq., or Robert Graham, of Fintry, Esq., a gentleman of uncommon worth, to whom I lie under very great obligations. The story of the poem, like most of my poems, is connected with my own story, and to give you the one, I must give you something of the other. I cannot boast of——

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I believe I shall, in whole, L.100 copy-right included, clear about L.400 some little odds; and even part of this depends upon what the gentleman has yet to settle with me. I give you this information, because you did me the honour to interest yourself much in my welfare.

. . . . . .

To give the rest of my story in brief, I have married "my Jean," and taken a farm; with the first step I have every day more and more reason to be satisfied; with the last, it is rather the reverse. I have a younger brother, who supports my aged mother; another still younger brother, and three sisters, in a farm. On my last return from Edinburgh, it cost me about L.180 to save them from ruin. Not that I have lost so much—I only interposed between my brother and his impending fate by the loan of so much. I give myself no airs on this, for it was mere selfishness on my part; I was conscious that the wrong scale of the balance was pretty heavily charged, and I thought that throwing a little filial piety, and fraternal affection, into the scale in my favour, might help to smooth matters at the *grand reckoning*. There is still one thing would make my circumstances quite easy; I have an excise officer's commission, and I live in the midst of a country division. My request to Mr. Graham, who is one of the commissioners of excise, was, if in his power, to procure me that division. If I were very sanguine, I might hope that some of my great patrons might procure me a treasury warrant for supervisor, surveyor-general, &c.

. . . . . .

Thus secure of a livelihood, "to thee, sweet poetry, delightful maid," I would consecrate my future days.

No. CIX.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, Jan. 6, 1789.

Many happy returns of the season to you, my dear Sir! May you be comparatively happy up to your comparative worth among the sons of men; which wish would, I am sure, make you one of the most blest of the human race.

I do not know if passing a "Writer to the Signet" be a trial of scientific merit, or a mere business of friends and interest. However it be, let me quote you my two favourite passages, which though I have repeated them ten thousand times, still they rouse my manhood and steel my resolution like inspiration.

——— On Reason build resolve,
That column of true majesty in man.
YOUNG.

Hear, Alfred, hero of the state,
Thy genius heaven's high will declare;
The triumph of the truly great
Is never, never to despair!
Is never to despair!
MASQUE OF ALFRED.

I grant you enter the lists of life, to struggle for bread, business, notice, and distinction, in common with hundreds.—But who are they? Men, like yourself, and of that aggregate body, your compeers, seven-tenths of them come short of your advantages natural and accidental; while two of those that remain either neglect their parts, as flowers blooming in a desert, or misspend their strength, like a bull goring a bramble bush.

But to change the theme: I am still catering for Johnson's publication; and among others, I have brushed up the following old favourite song a little, with a view to your worship. I have only altered a word here and there; but if you like the humour of it, we shall think of a stanza or two to add to it.

. . . . . .

No. CX.

TO BISHOP GEDDES.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 3d Feb. 1789.

VENERABLE FATHER,

As I am conscious that wherever I am you do me the honour to interest yourself in my welfare, it gives me pleasure to inform you, that I am here at last, stationary in the serious business of life, and have now not only the retired leisure, but the hearty inclination, to attend to those great and important questions—what I am? where I am? and for what I am destined?

In that first concern, the conduct of the man, there was ever but one side on which I was habitually blameable, and there I have secured myself in the way pointed out by Nature and Nature's God. I was sensible that, to so helpless a creature as a poor poet, a wife and family were incumbrances, which a species of prudence would bid him shun; but when the alternative was, being at eternal warfare with myself, on account of habitual follies, to give them no worse name, which no general example, no licentious wit, no sophistical infidelity would, to me, ever justify, I must have been a fool to have hesitated, and a madman to have made another choice.

. . . . . .

In the affair of a livelihood, I think myself tolerably secure: I have good hopes of my farm; but should they fail, I have an excise commission, which on my simple petition, will, at any time, procure me bread. There is a certain stigma affixed to the character of an excise officer, but I do not intend to borrow honour from any profession; and though the salary be comparatively small, it is great to any thing that the first twenty-five years of my life taught me to expect.

. . . . . .

Thus, with a rational aim and method in life, you may easily guess, my reverend and much-honoured friend, that my characteristical trade is not forgotten. I am, if possible, more than ever an enthusiast to the muses. I am determined to study man and nature, and in that view incessantly; and to try if the ripening and corrections of years can enable me to produce something worth preserving.

You will see in your book, which I beg your pardon for detaining so long, that I have been tuning my lyre on the banks of Nith. Some larger poetic plans that are floating in my imagination, or partly put in execution, I shall impart to you when I have the pleasure of meeting with you, which, if you are then in Edinburgh, I shall have about the beginning of March.

That acquaintance, worthy Sir, with which you were pleased to honour me, you must still allow me to challenge; for with whatever unconcern I give up my transient connection with the merely great, I cannot lose the patronizing notice of the learned and the good, without the bitterest regret.

No. CXI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 4th March, 1789.

HERE am I, my honoured friend, returned safe from the capital. To a man, who has a home, however humble or remote—if that home is like mine, the scene of domestic comfort—the bustle of Edinburgh will soon be a business of sickening disgust.

"Vain pomp and glory of this world, I hate you!"

When I must skulk into a corner, lest the rattling equipage of some gaping blockhead should mangle me in the mire, I am tempted to exclaim—"what merits has he had, or what demerit have I had, in some state of pre-existence, that he is ushered into this state of being with the sceptre of rule, and the key of riches, in his puny fist, and I am kicked into the world, the sport of folly, or the victim of pride?" I have read somewhere of a monarch (in Spain I think it was), who was so out of humour with the Ptolemean system of astronomy, that he said, had he been of the CREATOR'S council, he could have saved him a great deal of labour and absurdity. I will not defend this blasphemous speech; but often, as I have glided with humble stealth through the pomp of Prince's Street, it has suggested itself to me, as an improvement on the present human figure, that a man, in proportion to his own conceit of his consequence in the world, could have pushed out the longitude of his common size, as a snail pushes out his horns, or as we draw out a perspective. This trifling alteration, not to mention the prodigious saving it would be in the tear and wear of the neck and limb-sinews of many of his Majesty's liege subjects in the way of tossing the head and tiptoe strutting, would evidently turn out a vast advantage, in enabling us at once to

adjust the ceremonials in making a bow, or making way to a great man, and that too within a second of the precise spherical angle of reverence, or an inch of the particular point of respectful distance, which the important creature itself requires; as a measuring-glance at its towering altitude would determine the affair like instinct.

You are right, Madam, in your idea of poor Mylne's poem, which he has addressed to me. The piece has a good deal of merit, but it has one great fault—it is, by far, too long. Besides, my success has encouraged such a shoal of ill-spawned monsters to crawl into public notice, under the title of Scottish Poets, that the very term of Scottish Poetry borders on the burlesque. When I write to Mr. C——, I shall advise him rather to try one of his deceased friend's English pieces. I am prodigiously hurried with my own matters, else I would have requested a perusal of all Mylne's poetic performances; and would have offered his friends my assistance in either selecting or correcting what would be proper for the press. What it is that occupies me so much, and perhaps a little oppresses my present spirits, shall fill up a paragraph in some future letter. In the meantime allow me to close this epistle with a few lines done by a friend of mine . . . . . I give you them, that as you have seen the original, you may guess whether one or two alterations I have ventured to make in them, be any real improvement.

Like the fair plant that from our touch withdraws,
Shrink mildly fearful even from applause,
Be all a mother's fondest hope can dream,
And all you are, my charming ———, seem.
Straight as the fox-glove, ere her bells disclose,
Mild as the maiden-blushing hawthorn blows,
Fair as the fairest of each lovely kind,
Your form shall be the image of your mind:
Your manners shall so true your soul express,
That all shall long to know the worth they guess;
Congenial hearts shall greet with kindred love,
And even sick'ning envy must approve.*

No. CXII.

LETTER FROM WILLIAM BURNS, THE POET'S BROTHER.

[This and three letters which follow hereafter, are the genuine and artless productions of the poet's younger Brother, William Burns, a young man, who after having served an apprenticeship to the trade of a Saddler, took his road towards the South, and having resided a short time at Newcastle-upon-Tyne, arrived in London, where he died of a putrid fever in the year 1790.]

DEAR SIR, *Longtown, Feb.* 15, 1789.

As I am now in a manner only entering into the world, I begin this our correspondence, with a view of being a gainer by your advice, more than ever you can be by any thing I can write you of what I see, or what I hear, in the course of my wanderings. I know not how it happened, but you were more shy of your counsel than I could have wished the time I staid with you: whether it was because you thought it would disgust me to have my faults freely told me while I was dependant on you; or whether it was because you saw that by my indolent disposition, your instructions would have no effect, I cannot determine; but if it proceeded from any of the above causes, the reason of withholding your admonition is now done away, for I now stand on my own bottom, and that indolence, which I am very conscious of, is something rubbed off, by being called to act in life whether I will or not; and my inexperience, which I daily feel, makes me wish for that advice which you are so able to give, and which I can only expect from you or Gilbert since the loss of the kindest and ablest of fathers.

The morning after I went from the Isle, I left Dumfries about five o'clock and came to Annan to breakfast, and staid about an hour; and I reached this place about two o'clock. I have got work here, and I intend to stay a month or six weeks, and then go forward, as I wish to be at York about the latter end of summer, where I propose to spend next winter, and go on for London in the spring.

I have the promise of seven shillings a week from Mr. Proctor while I stay here, and sixpence more if he succeeds himself, for he has only new begun trade here. I am to pay four shillings per week of board wages, so that my neat income here will be much the same as in Dumfries.

The enclosed you will send to Gilbert with the first opportunity. Please send me the first Wednesday after you receive this, by the Carlisle waggon, two of my coarse shirts, one of my best linen ones, my velveteen vest, and a neckcloth; write to me along with them, and direct to me, Saddler, in Longtown, and they will not miscarry, for I am boarded in the waggoner's house. You may either let them be given in to the waggon, or send them to Coulthard and Gellebourn's shop and they will forward them. Pray write me often while I stay here.—I wish you would send me a letter, though never so small, every week, for they will be no expense to me, and but little trouble to you. Please to give my best wishes to my sister-in-law, and believe me to be your affectionate

And obliged Brother,
WILLIAM BURNS.

* These beautiful lines, we have reason to believe, are the production of the lady to whom this letter is adressed.

P. S. The great coat you gave me at parting did me singular service the day I came here, and merits my hearty thanks. From what has been said the conclusion is this; that my hearty thanks and my best wishes are all that you and my sister must expect from

W. B.

No. CXIII.

TO THE REV. P. CARFRAE.

REVEREND SIR, 1789.

I DO not recollect that I have ever felt a severer pang of shame, than on looking at the date of your obliging letter, which accompanied Mr. Mylne's poem.

. . . . . .

I am much to blame: the honour Mr. Mylne has done me, greatly enhanced in its value by the endearing, though melancholy circumstance, of its being the last production of his muse, deserved a better return.

I have, as you hint, thought of sending a copy of the poem to some periodical publication; but, on second thoughts, I am afraid that, in the present case, it would be an improper step. My success, perhaps as much accidental as merited, has brought an inundation of nonsense under the name of Scottish poetry. Subscription-bills for Scottish poems have so dunned, and daily do dun the public, that the very name is in danger of contempt. For these reasons, if publishing any of Mr. M.'s poems in a magazine, &c. be at all prudent, in my opinion it certainly should not be a Scottish poem. The profits of the labours of a man of genius, are, I hope, as honourable as any profits whatever; and Mr. Mylne's relations are most justly entitled to that honest harvest, which fate has denied himself to reap. But let the friends of Mr. Mylne's fame (among whom I crave the honour of ranking myself), always keep in eye his respectability as a man and as a poet, and take no measure that, before the world knows any thing about him, would risk his name and character being classed with the fools of the times.

I have, Sir, some experience of publishing; and the way in which I would proceed with Mr. Mylne's poems, is this:—I would publish, in two or three English and Scottish public papers, any one of his English poems which should, by private judges, be thought the most excellent, and mention it at the same time, as one of the productions of a Lothian farmer, of respectable character, lately deceased, whose poems his friends had it in idea to publish soon, by subscription, for the sake of his numerous family:—not in pity to that family, but in justice to what his friends think the poetic merits of the deceased; and to secure, in the most effectual manner, to those tender connections, whose right it is, the pecuniary reward of those merits.

No. CXIV.

TO DR. MOORE.

SIR, *Ellisland, 23d March*, 1789.

THE gentleman who will deliver you this is a Mr. Nielson, a worthy clergyman in my neighbourhood, and a very particular acquaintance of mine. As I have troubled him with this packet, I must turn him over to your goodness, to recompense him for it in a way in which he much needs your assistance, and where you can effectually serve him:—Mr. Nielson is on his way for France, to wait on his Grace of Queensberry, on some little business of a good deal of importance to him, and he wishes for your instructions respecting the most eligible mode of travelling, &c. for him, when he has crossed the Channel. I should not have dared to take this liberty with you, but that I am told, by those who have the honour of your personal acquaintance, that to be a poor honest Scotchman is a letter of recommendation to you, and that to have it in your power to serve such a character, gives you much pleasure.

. . . . . .

The enclosed ode is a compliment to the memory of the late Mrs. ———, of ———. You probably knew her personally, an honour of which I cannot boast; but I spent my early years in her neighbourhood, and among her servants and tenants. I know that she was detested with the most heartfelt cordiality. However, in the particular part of her conduct which roused my poetic wrath, she was much less blameable. In January last, on my road to Ayrshire, I had put up at Bailie Wigham's in Sanquhar, the only tolerable inn in the place. The frost was keen, and the grim evening and howling wind were ushering in a night of snow and drift. My horse and I were both much fatigued with the labours of the day, and just as my friend the Bailie and I were bidding defiance to the storm, over a smoking bowl, in wheels the funeral pageantry of the late great Mrs. ———, and poor I am forced to brave all the horrors of the tempestuous night, and jade my horse, my young favourite horse, whom I had just christened Pegasus, twelve miles farther on, through the wildest muirs and hills of Ayrshire, to New Cumnock, the next inn. The powers of poesy and prose sink under me, when I would describe what I felt. Suffice it to say, that when a good fire, at New Cumnock, had so far recovered my frozen sinews, I sat down and wrote the enclosed ode.

I was at Edinburgh lately, and settled finally with Mr. Creech; and I must own, that, at last, he has been amicable and fair with me.

No. CXV.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

Ellisland, 2d April, 1789.

I WILL make no excuses, my dear Bibliopolus, (God forgive me for murdering language!) that I have sat down to write you on this vile paper.

. . . . . .

It is economy, Sir; it is that cardinal virtue, prudence; so I beg you will sit down, and either compose or borrow a panegyric. If you are going to borrow, apply to

. . . . . .

to compose, or rather to compound, something very clever on my remarkable frugality; that I write to one of my most esteemed friends on this wretched paper, which was originally intended for the venal fist of some drunken exciseman, to take dirty notes in a miserable vault of an ale-cellar.

O Frugality! thou mother of ten thousand blessings—thou cook of fat beef and dainty greens!—thou manufacturer of warm Shetland hose, and comfortable surtouts!—thou old housewife, darning thy decayed stockings with thy ancient spectacles on thy aged nose;—lead me, hand me in thy clutching palsied fist, up those heights, and through those thickets, hitherto inaccessible, and impervious to my anxious weary feet:—not those Parnassian craggs, bleak and barren, where the hungry worshippers of fame are, breathless, clambering, hanging between heaven and hell; but those glittering cliffs of Potosi, where the all-sufficient, all-powerful deity, Wealth, holds his immediate court of joys and pleasures; where the sunny exposure of plenty, and the hot walls of profusion, produce those blissful fruits of luxury, exotics in this world, and natives of paradise!—Thou withered sybil, my sage conductress, usher me into the refulgent, adored presence!—The power, splendid and potent as he now is, was once the puling nursling of thy faithful care, and tender arms! Call me thy son, thy cousin, thy kinsman, or favourite, and adjure the god, by the scenes of his infant years, no longer to repulse me as a stranger, or an alien, but to favour me with his peculiar countenance and protection! He daily bestows his greatest kindness on the undeserving and the worthless—assure him, that I bring ample documents of meritorious demerits! Pledge yourself for me, that, for the glorious cause of LUCRE, I will do any thing, be any thing—but the horse-leech of private oppression, or the vulture of public robbery!

. . . . . .

But to descend from heroics,

. . . . . .

I want a Shakspeare; I want likewise an English dictionary—Johnson's, I suppose, is best. In these and all my prose commissions, the cheapest is always the best for me. There is a small debt of honour that I owe Mr. Robert Cleghorn, in Saughton Mills, my worthy friend, and your well-wisher. Please give him, and urge him to take it, the first time you see him, ten shillings worth of any thing you have to sell, and place it to my account.

The library scheme that I mentioned to you is already begun, under the direction of Captain Riddel. There is another in emulation of it going on at Closeburn, under the auspices of Mr. Monteith, of Closeburn, which will be on a greater scale than ours. Captain R. gave his infant society a great many of his old books, else I had written you on that subject; but, one of these days, I shall trouble you with a commission for "The Monkland Friendly Society"—a copy of *The Spectator, Mirror, and Lounger; Man of Feeling, Man of the World, Guthrie's Geographical Grammar*, with some religious pieces, will likely be our first order.

When I grow richer, I will write to you on gilt post, to make amends for this sheet. At present, every guinea has a five-guinea errand with

My dear Sir,
Your faithful, poor, but honest friend,
R. B.

No. CXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 2d April, 1789.

. . . . . .

I NO sooner hit on any poetic plan or fancy, but I wish to send it to you; and if knowing and reading these give half the pleasure to you, that communicating them to you gives to me, I am satisfied.

. . . . . .

I have a poetic whim in my head, which I at present dedicate, or rather inscribe, to the Right Hon. C. J. Fox; but how long that fancy may hold, I cannot say. A few of the first lines I have just rough-sketched, as follows:—

SKETCH OF C. J. FOX.

How wisdom and folly meet, mix, and unite;
How virtue and vice blend their black and their white;
How genius, th' illustrious father of fiction,
Confounds rule and law, reconciles contradiction—
I sing: if these mortals, the critics, should bustle,
I care not, not I, let the critics go whistle.

But now for a patron, whose name and whose glory,
At once may illustrate and honour my story.

Thou first of our orators, first of our wits;
Yet whose parts and acquirements seem mere lucky hits;
With knowledge so vast, and with judgment so strong,
No man with the half of 'em e'er went far wrong;
With passions so potent, and fancies so bright,
No man with the half of 'em e'er went quite right;
A sorry, poor misbegot son of the muses,
For using thy name offers fifty excuses.

Good L—d, what is man! for as simple he looks,
Do but try to develope his hooks and his crooks;
With his depths and his shallows, his good and his evil,
All in all he's a problem must puzzle the devil.

On his one ruling passion Sir Pope hugely labours,
That like the old Hebrew walking-switch, eats up its neighbours:
Mankind are his show-box—a friend, would you know him?
Pull the string, ruling passion, the picture will show him.
What pity, in rearing so beauteous a system,
One trifling particular, truth, should have miss'd him;
For, spite of his fine theoretic positions,
Mankind is a science defies definitions.

Some sort all our qualities each to its tribe,
And think human nature they truly describe;
Have you found this, or t'other? there's more in the wind,
As by one drunken fellow his comrades you'll find.
But such is the flaw, or the depth of the plan,
In the make of that wonderful creature call'd Man.
No two virtues, whatever relation they claim,
Nor even two different shades of the same,
Though like as was ever twin brother to brother,
Possessing the one shall imply you've the other.

. . . . . .

On the 20th current I hope to have the honour of assuring you, in person, how sincerely I am,

. . . . . .

No. CXVII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

MY DEAR SIR, *Ellisland, 4th May*, 1789.

YOUR *duty free* favour of the 26th April I received two days ago: I will not say I perused it with pleasure; that is the cold compliment of ceremony; I perused it, Sir, with delicious satisfaction.—In short, it is such a letter, that not you, nor your friend, but the legislature, by express proviso in their postage laws, should frank. A letter informed with the soul of friendship, is such an honour to human nature, that they should order it free ingress and egress to and from their bags, and mails, as an encouragement and mark of distinction to super-eminent virtue.

I have just put the last hand to a little poem which I think will be something to your taste. One morning lately as I was out pretty early in the fields sowing some grass seeds, I heard the burst of a shot from a neighbouring plantation, and presently a poor little wounded hare came crippling by me. You will guess my indignation at the inhuman fellow who could shoot a hare at this season, when they all of them have young ones. Indeed there is something in that business of destroying, for our sport, individuals in the animal creation that do not injure us materially, which I could never reconcile to my ideas of virtue.

(*See Poetry.*)

Let me know how you like my poem. I am doubtful whether it would not be an improvement to keep out the last stanza but one altogether.

C—— is a glorious production of the author of man. You, he, and the noble Colonel of the C—— F—— are, to me,

"Dear as the ruddy drops which warm my breast."

I have a good mind to make verses on you all, to the tune of "*three good fellows ayont the glen.*"

No. CXVIII.

THE poem, in the preceding letter, had also been sent by our bard to Dr. Gregory for his criticism. The following is that gentleman's reply.

FROM DR. GREGORY.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, 2d June*, 1789.

I TAKE the first leisure hour I could command, to thank you for your letter, and the copy of verses enclosed in it. As there is real poetic

merit, I mean both fancy, and tenderness, and some happy expressions, in them, I think they well deserve that you should revise them carefully and polish them to the utmost. This I am sure you can do if you please, for you have great command both of expression and of rhymes: and you may judge from the two last pieces of Mrs. Hunter's poetry, that I gave you, how much correctness and high polish enhance the value of such compositions. As you desire it, I shall, with great freedom, give you my *most rigorous* criticisms on your verses. I wish you would give me another edition of them, much amended, and I will send it to Mrs. Hunter, who, I am sure, will have much pleasure in reading it. Pray, give me likewise for myself, and her too, a copy (as much amended as you please) of the *Water Fowl on Loch Turit.*

The *Wounded Hare* is a pretty good subject; but the measure, or stanza, you have chosen for it, is not a good one; it does not *flow* well; and the rhyme of the fourth line is almost lost by its distance from the first; and the two interposed, close rhymes. If I were you, I would put it into a different stanza yet.

Stanza 1.—The execrations in the first two lines are strong or coarse; but they may pass. "Murder-aiming" is a bad compound epithet, and not very intelligible. "Blood-stained," in stanza iii. line 4, has the same fault: *Bleeding* bosom is infinitely better. You have accustomed yourself to such epithets, and have no notion how stiff and quaint they appear to others, and how incongruous with poetic fancy, and tender sentiments. Suppose Pope had written, "Why that blood-stained bosom gored," how would you have liked it? *Form* is neither a poetic, nor a dignified, nor a plain, common word: it is a mere sportsman's word; unsuitable to pathetic or serious poetry.

"Mangled" is a coarse word. "Innocent," in this sense, is a nursery word; but both may pass.

Stanza 4.—"Who will now provide that life a mother only can bestow," will not do at all: it is not grammar—it is not intelligible. Do you mean "provide for that life which the mother had bestowed and used to provide for?"

There was a ridiculous slip of the pen, "Feeling" (I suppose) for "Fellow," in the title of your copy of verses; but even fellow would be wrong: it is but a colloquial and vulgar word, unsuitable to your sentiments. "Shot" is improper too.—On seeing a *person* (or a sportsman) wound a hare; it is needless to add with what weapon; but if you think otherwise, you should say, *with a fowling-piece.*

Let me see you when you come to town, and I will show you some more of Mrs. Hunter's poems.*

* It must be admitted, that this criticism is not more distinguished by its good sense, than by its freedom from ceremony. It is impossible not to smile at the manner in which the poet may be supposed to have received it. In fact it appears, as the sailors say, to have thrown him *quite a-back.* In a letter which he wrote soon after, he says, "Dr. G——— is a good man, but he crucifies me."—And again, "I believe in the iron justice of Dr. G———; but like the devils, I believe and tremble." However, he profited by these criticisms, as the reader will find, by comparing this first edition of the poem, with that published afterwards.

No. CXIX.

TO MR. JAMES HAMILTON,

GROCER, GLASGOW.

DEAR SIR, *Ellisland, May*, 26, 1789.

I SEND you by John Glover, carrier, the above account for Mr. Turnbull, as I suppose you know his address.

I would fain offer, my dear Sir, a word of sympathy with your misfortunes; but it is a tender string, and I know not how to touch it. It is easy to flourish a set of high-flown sentiments on the subject that would give great satisfaction to—a breast quite at ease; but as ONE observes, who was very seldom mistaken in the theory of life, "The heart knoweth its own sorrows, and a stranger intermeddleth not therewith."

Among some distressful emergencies that I have experienced in life, I have ever laid this down as my foundation of comfort—*That he he who has lived the life of an honest man, has by no means lived in vain!*

With every wish for your welfare and future success,

I am, my dear Sir,
Sincerely yours.

No. CXX.

TO WM. CREECH, Esq.

SIR, *Ellisland, May* 30, 1789.

I HAD intended to have troubled you with a long letter, but at present the delightful sensations of an omnipotent toothach so engross all my inner man, as to put it out of my power even to write nonsense.—However, as in duty bound, I approach my bookseller with an offering in my hand—a few poetic clinches and a song:—To expect any other kind of offering from the RHYMING TRIBE, would be to know them much less than you do. I do not pretend that there is much merit in these *morceaux*, but I have two reasons for sending them; *primo*, they are mostly ill-natured, so are in unison with my present feelings, while fifty troops of infernal spirits are driving post from ear to ear along my jaw-bones; and *secondly*, they are so short, that you cannot leave off in the middle, and so hurt my pride in the idea that you found any work of mine too heavy to get through.

I have a request to beg of you, and I not only beg of you, but conjure you—by all your wishes and by all your hopes, that the muse

will spare the satiric wink in the moment of your foibles; that she will warble the song of rapture round your hymeneal couch; and that she will shed on your turf the honest tear of elegiac gratitude! grant my request as speedily as possible.—Send me by the very first fly or coach for this place, three copies of the last edition of my poems; which place to my account.

Now, may the good things of prose, and the good things of verse, come among thy hands until they be filled with the *good things of this life!* prayeth

ROBt. BURNS.

No. CXXI.

TO MR. M'AULEY,

OF DUMBARTON.

DEAR SIR, *4th June*, 1789.

THOUGH I am not without my fears respecting my fate at that grand, universal inquest of right and wrong, commonly called *The Last Day*, yet I trust there is one sin, which that arch-vagabond, Satan, who, I understand, is to be king's evidence, cannot throw in my teeth —I mean ingratitude. There is a certain pretty large quantum of kindness for which I remain, and from inability, I fear, must remain your debtor; but though unable to repay the debt, I assure you, Sir, I shall ever warmly remember the obligation. It gives me the sincerest pleasure to hear by my old acquaintance, Mr. Kennedy, that you are, in immortal Allan's language, "Hale and weel, and living;" and that your charming family are well, and promising to be an amiable and respectable addition to the company of performers, whom the Great Manager of the Drama of Man is bringing into action for the succeeding age.

With respect to my welfare, a subject in which you once warmly and effectively interested yourself, I am here in my old way, holding my plough, marking the growth of my corn, or the health of my dairy; and at times sauntering by the delightful windings of the Nith, on the margin of which I have built my humble domicile, praying for seasonable weather, or holding an intrigue with the Muses; the only gypseys with whom I have now any intercourse. As I am entered into the holy state of matrimony, I trust my face is turned completely Zionward; and as it is a rule with all honest fellows, to repeat no grievances, I hope that the little poetic licences of former days, will of course fall under the oblivious influence of some good-natured statute of celestial proscription. In my family devotion, which, like a good presbyterian, I occasionally give to my household folks, I am extremely fond of the psalm, "Let not the errors of my youth," &c. and that other, "Lo, children are God's heritage," &c. in which last Mrs. Burns, who, by the bye, has a glorious "wood-note wild" at either old song or psalmody, joins me with the pathos of Handel's Messiah.

. . . . . .

No. CXXII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, June 8, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I AM perfectly ashamed of myself when I look at the date of your last. It is not that I forget the friend of my heart and the companion of my peregrinations; but I have been condemned to drudgery beyond sufferance, though not, thank God, beyond redemption. I have had a collection of poems by a lady put into my hands to prepare them for the press; which horrid task, with sowing my corn with my own hand, a parcel of masons, wrights, plaisterers, &c. to attend to, roaming on business through Ayrshire—all this was against me, and the very first dreadful article was of itself too much for me.

13th. I have not had a moment to spare from incessant toil since the 8th. Life, my dear Sir, is a serious matter. You know by experience that a man's individual self is a good deal, but believe me, a wife and family of children, whenever you have the honour to be a husband and a father, will shew you that your present most anxious hours of solicitude are spent on trifles. The welfare of those who are very dear to us, whose only support, hope and stay we are—this, to a generous mind, is another sort of more important object of care than any concerns whatever which centre merely in the individual. On the other hand, let no young, unmarried, rakehelly dog among you, make a song of his pretended liberty and freedom from care. If the relations we stand in to king, country, kindred, and friends, be any thing but the visionary fancies of dreaming metaphysicians; if religion, virtue, magnanimity, generosity, humanity and justice be aught but empty sounds; then the man who may be said to live only for others, for the beloved, honourable female whose tender faithful embrace endears life, and for the helpless little innocents who are to be the men and women, the worshippers of his God, the subjects of his king, and the support, nay the very vital existence of his COUNTRY, in the ensuing age;—compare such a man with any fellow whatever, who, whether he bustle and push in business among labourers, clerks, statesmen; or whether he roar and rant, and drink and sing in taverns—a fellow over whose grave no one will breathe a single heigh-ho, except from the

cobweb-tie of what is called good fellowship—who has no view nor aim but what terminates in himself—if there be any grovelling earthborn wretch of our species, a renegado to common sense, who would fain believe that the noble creature, man, is no better than a sort of fungus, generated out of nothing, nobody knows how, and soon dissipating in nothing, nobody knows where; such a stupid beast, such a crawling reptile might balance the foregoing unexaggerated comparison, but no one else would have the patience.

Forgive me, my dear Sir, for this long silence. *To make you amends*, I shall send you soon, and more encouraging still, without any postage, one or two rhymes of my later manufacture.

No. CXXIII.

FROM DR. MOORE.

DEAR SIR, *Clifford Street, 10th June*, 1789.

I THANK you for the different communications you have made me of your occasional productions in manuscript, all of which have merit, and some of them merit of a different kind from what appears in the poems you have published. You ought carefully to preserve all your occasional productions, to correct and improve them at your leisure: and when you can select as many of these as will make a volume, publish it either at Edinburgh or London, by subscription: On such an occasion, it may be in my power, as it is very much in my inclination, to be of service to you.

If I were to offer an opinion, it would be, that in your future productions you should abandon the Scottish stanza and dialect, and adopt the measure and language of modern English poetry.

The stanza which you use in imitation of *Christ Kirk on the Green*, with the tiresome repitition of "that day," is fatiguing to English ears, and I should think not very agreeable to Scottish.

All the fine satire and humour of your *Holy Fair* is lost on the English; yet, without more trouble to yourself, you could have conveyed the whole to them. The same is true of some of your other poems. In your *Epistle to J. S——*, the stanzas from that beginning with this line, "This life, so far's I understand," to that which ends with, "Short while it grieves," are easy, flowing, gaily philosophical, and of Horatian elegance—the language is English, with a *few* Scottish words, and some of those so harmonious, as to add to the beauty: for what poet would not prefer *gloaming* to *twilight*.

I imagine, that by carefully keeping, and occasionally polishing and correcting those verses, which the muse dictates, you will, within a year or two, have another volume as large as the first, ready for the press; and this, without diverting you from every proper attention to the study and practice of husbandry, in which I understand you are very learned, and which I fancy you will choose to adhere to as a wife, while poetry amuses you from time to time as a mistress. The former, like a prudent wife, must not show ill humour, although you retain a sneaking kindness to this agreeable gipsy, and pay her occasional visits, which in no manner alienates your heart from your lawful spouse, but tends on the contrary to promote her interest.

I desired Mr. Cadell to write to Mr. Creech to send you a copy of *Zeluco*. This performance has had great success here, but I shall be glad to have your opinion of it, because I know you are above saying what you do not think.

I beg you will offer my best wishes to my very good friend Mrs. Hamilton, who I understand is your neighbour. If she is as happy as I wish her, she is happy enough. Make my compliments also to Mrs. Burns, and believe me to be, with sincere esteem,

Dear Sir, yours, &c.

No. CXXIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 21st June, 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

WILL you take the effusions, the miserable effusions of low spirits, just as they flow from their bitter spring. I know not of any particular cause for this worst of all my foes besetting me, but for some time my soul has been beclouded with a thickening atmosphere of evil imaginations and gloomy presages.

. . . . . .

Monday Evening.

I have just heard . . . . give a sermon. He is a man famous for his benevolence, and I revere him; but from such ideas of my Creator, good Lord deliver me! Religion, my honoured friend, is surely a simple business, as it equally concerns the ignorant and the learned, the poor and the rich. That there is an incomprehensibly great Being, to whom I owe my existence, and that he must be intimately acquainted with the operations and progress of the internal machinery, and consequent outward deportment of this creature which he has made; these are, I think, self-evident propositions. That there is a real and eternal distinction between virtue and vice, and consequently that I am an accountable creature; that from the seeming nature of the human mind, as well as from the evident imperfection, nay, positive injustice, in the administration of affairs, both in the natural and moral worlds, there must be a retributive scene of existence beyond the grave; must, I think,

be allowed by every one who will give himself a moment's reflection. I will go farther, and affirm, that from the sublimity, excellence, and purity of his doctrine and precepts, unparalleled by all the aggregated wisdom and learning of many preceding ages, though, *to appearance*, he himself was the obscurest and most illiterate of our species; therefore, Jesus Christ was from God.

. . . . . .

Whatever mitigates the woes, or increases the happiness of others, this is my criterion of goodness; and whatever injures society at large, or any individual in it, this is my measure of iniquity.

What think you, Madam, of my creed? I trust that I have said nothing that will lessen me in the eye of one, whose good opinion I value almost next to the approbation of my own mind.

No. CXXV.

FROM MISS J. L———.

SIR, *Loudon-House, 12th July*, 1789.

THOUGH I have not the happiness of being personally acquainted with you, yet amongst the number of those who have read and admired your publications, may I be permitted to trouble you with this. You must know, Sir, I am somewhat in love with the Muses, though I cannot boast of any favours they have deigned to confer upon me as yet; my situation in life has been very much against me as to that. I have spent some years in and about Ecclefechan (where my parents reside), in the station of a servant, and am now come to Loudon-House, at present possessed by Mrs. H——: she is daughter to Mrs. Dunlop, of Dunlop, whom I understand you are particularly acquainted with. As I had the pleasure of perusing your poems, I felt a partiality for the author, which I should not have experienced had you been in more dignified station. I wrote a few verses of address to you, which I did not then think of ever presenting: but as fortune seems to have favoured me in this, by bringing me into a family by whom you are well known and much esteemed, and where perhaps I may have an opportunity of seeing you; I shall, in hopes of your future friendship, take the liberty to transcribe them.

. . . . . .

FAIR fa' the honest rustic swain,
The pride o' a' our Scottish plain:
Thou gi'es us joy to hear thy strain,
And note sae sweet:
Old Ramsay's shade revived again
In thee we greet.

Loved Thalia, that delightfu' muse,
Seem'd lang shut up as a recluse;
To all she did her aid refuse,
Since Allan's day:
'Till Burns arose, then did she chuse
To grace his lay.

To hear thy sang all ranks desire,
Sae weel you strike the dormant lyre;
Apollo with poetic fire
Thy breast does warm;
And critics silently admire
Thy art to charm.

Cæsar and Luath weel can speak,
'Tis pity e'er their gabs should steek,
But into human nature keek,
And knots unravel:
To hear their lectures once a-week,
Nine miles I'd travel.

Thy dedication to G. H.
An unco bonnie hamespun speech,
Wi' winsome glee the heart can teach
A better lesson,
Than servile bards, who fawn and fleech
Like beggar's messon.

When slighted love becomes your theme,
And women's faithless vows you blame;
With so much pathos you exclaim,
In your lament;
But glanced by the most frigid dame,
She would relent.

The daisy too ye sing wi' skill;
And weel ye praise the whisky gill;
In vain I blunt my feckless quill,
Your fame to raise;
While echo sounds from ilka hill,
To Burns's praise.

Did Addison or Pope but hear,
Or Sam, that critic most severe,
A ploughboy sing with throat sae clear,
They in a rage,
Their works would a' in pieces tear,
And curse your page.

Sure Milton's eloquence were faint,
The beauties of your verse to paint,
My rude unpolish'd strokes but taint
Their brilliancy;
Th' attempt would doubtless vex a saint,
And weel may me.

The task I'll drop with heart sincere,
To heaven present my humble pray'r,
That all the blessings mortals share,
May be by turns,
Dispensed by an indulgent care
To Robert Burns.

. . . . . .

Sir, I hope you will pardon my boldness in this; my hand trembles while I write to you, conscious of my unworthiness of what I would most earnestly solicit, viz. your favour and friendship; yet hoping you will show yourself possessed of as much generosity and good-nature as will prevent your exposing what may justly be found liable to censure in this measure, I shall take the liberty to subscribe myself,

Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

J——— ———.

P. S.—If you would condescend to honour me with a few lines from your hand, I would take it as a particular favour, and direct to me at Loudon-House, near *Galslock*.

No. CXXVI.

FROM MR. CUNNINGHAM.

MY DEAR SIR, *London, 5th Aug.* 1789.

EXCUSE me when I say, that the uncommon abilities which you possess, must render your correspondence very acceptable to any one. I can assure you, I am particularly proud of your partiality, and shall endeavour, by every method in my power, to merit a continuance of your politeness.

. . . . . .

When you can spare a few moments I should be proud of a letter from you, directed for me, Gerrard Street, Soho.

. . . . . .

I cannot express my happiness sufficiently at the instance of your attachment to my late inestimable friend, Bob Fergusson, who was particularly intimate with myself and relations.* While I recollect with pleasure his extraordinary talents, and many amiable qualities, it affords me the greatest consolation, that I am honoured with the correspondence of his successor in national simplicity and genius. That Mr. Burns has refined in the art of poetry, must readily be admitted; but notwithstanding many favourable representations, I am yet to learn that he inherits his convivial powers.

There was such a richness of conversation, such a plenitude of fancy and attraction in him, that when I call the happy period of our intercourse to my memory, I feel myself in a state of delirium. I was then younger than him by eight or ten years; but his manner was so felicitous, that he enraptured every person around him, and infused into the hearts of the young and old, the spirit and animation which operated on his own mind.

I am, dear Sir, yours, &c.

* The erection of a monument to him.

No. CXXVII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM,

IN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

MY DEAR SIR,

THE hurry of a farmer in this particular season, and the indolence of a poet at all times and seasons, will, I hope, plead my excuse for neglecting so long to answer your obliging letter of the 5th of August.

That you have done well in quitting your laborious concern in . . . . I do not doubt; the weighty reasons you mention were, I hope, very, and deservedly indeed, weighty ones, and your health is a matter of the last importance; but whether the remaining proprietors of the paper have also done well, is what I much doubt. The . . . . ., so far as I was a reader, exhibited such a brilliancy of point, such an elegance of paragraph, and such a variety of intelligence, that I can hardly conceive it possible to continue a daily paper in the same degree of excellence; but if there was a man who had abilities equal to the task, that man's assistance the proprietors have lost.

. . . . . .

When I received your letter I was transcribing for . . . ., my letter to the magistrates of the Canongate, Edinburgh, begging their permission to place a tomb-stone over poor Fergusson, and their edict in consequence of my petition; but now I shall send them to . . . . . Poor Fergusson! If there be a life beyond the grave, which I trust there is; and if there be a good God presiding over all nature, which I am sure there is; thou art now enjoying existence in a glorious world, where worth of the heart alone is distinction in the man; where riches, deprived of all their pleasure-purchasing powers, return to their native sordid matter: where titles and honours are the disregarded reveries of an idle dream; and where that heavy virtue, which is the negative consequence of steady dulness, and those thoughtless, though often destructive follies, which are the unavoidable aberrations of frail human nature, will be thrown into equal oblivion as if they had never been!

Adieu, my dear Sir! so soon as your present views and schemes are concentred in an aim, I shall be glad to hear from you: as your welfare and happiness is by no means a subject indifferent to

Yours, &c.

No. CXXVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 6th September, 1789.

DEAR MADAM,

I HAVE mentioned in my last, my appointment to the excise, and the birth of little Frank; who, by the bye, I trust will be no discredit to the honourable name of Wallace, as he has a fine manly countenance, and a figure that might do credit to a little fellow two months older; and likewise an excellent good temper, though when he pleases he has a pipe, only not quite so loud as the horn that his immortal namesake blew as a signal to take out the pin of Stirling bridge.

I had some time ago an epistle, part poetic, and part prosaic, from your poetess, Mrs. J. L——; a very ingenious, but modest composition. I should have written her as she requested, but for the hurry of this new business. I have heard of her and her compositions in this country: and I am happy to add, always to the honour of her character. The fact is, I know not well how to write to her; I should sit down to a sheet of paper that I knew not how to stain. I am no daub at fine drawn letter-writing; and except when prompted by friendship or gratitude, or which happens extremely rarely, inspired by the Muse (I know not her name), that presides over epistolary writing, I sit down, when necessitated to write, as I would sit down to beat hemp.

Some parts of your letter of the 20th August struck me with melancholy concern for the state of your mind at present.

. . . . . .

Would I could write you a letter of comfort! I would sit down to it with as much pleasure, as I would to write an epic poem of my own composition, that should equal the *Iliad.* Religion, my dear friend, is the true comfort! A strong persuasion in a future state of existence; a proposition so obviously probable, that, setting revelation aside, every nation and people, so far as investigation has reached, for at least near four thousand years, have, in some mode or other, firmly believed it. In vain would we reason and pretend to doubt. I have myself done so to a very daring pitch; but when I reflected, that I was opposing the most ardent wishes, and the most darling hopes of good men, and flying in the face of all human belief, in all ages, I was shocked at my own conduct.

I know not whether I have ever sent you the following lines, or if you have ever seen them; but it is one of my favourite quotations, which I keep constantly by me in my progress through life, in the language of the book of Job,

"Against the day of battle and of war."—

spoken of religion.

"'Tis *this*, my friend, that streaks our morning bright,
'Tis *this* that gilds the horror of our night,
When wealth forsakes us, and when friends are few;
When friends are faithless, or when foes pursue;
'Tis this that wards the blow, or stills the smart,
Disarms affliction or repels his dart:
Within the breast bids purest raptures rise,
Bids smiling conscience spread her cloudless skies."

I have been very busy with *Zeluco.* The Doctor is so obliging as to request my opinion of it; and I have been revolving in my mind some kind of criticisms on novel writing, but it is a depth beyond my research. I shall however digest my thoughts on the subject as well as I can. *Zeluco* is a most sterling performance.

Farewell! *A Dieu, le bon Dieu, je vous commende!*

No. CXXIX.

FROM DR. BLACKLOCK.

Edinburgh, 24th August, 1789.

DEAR BURNS, thou brother of my heart,
Both for thy virtues and thy art:
If art it may be call'd in thee,
Which nature's bounty, large and free,
With pleasure on thy breast diffuses,
And warms thy soul with all the Muses.
Whether to laugh with easy grace,
Thy numbers move the sage's face,
Or bid the softer passions rise,
And ruthless souls with grief surprise,
'Tis nature's voice distinctly felt,
Through thee her organ, thus to melt.

Most anxiously I wish to know,
With thee of late how matters go;
How keeps thy much-loved Jean her health?
What promises thy farm of wealth?
Whether the Muse persists to smile,
And all thy anxious cares beguile?
Whether bright fancy keeps alive?
And how thy darling infants thrive?

For me, with grief and sickness spent,
Since I my journey homeward bent,
Spirits depress'd no more I mourn,
But vigour, life, and health return.
No more to gloomy thoughts a prey,
I sleep all night, and live all day;
By turns my book and friend enjoy,
And thus my circling hours employ;
Happy while yet these hours remain,
If Burns could join the cheerful train,

With wonted zeal, sincere and fervent,
Salute once more his humble servant,
THO. BLACKLOCK.

No. CXXX.

TO DR. BLACKLOCK.

Ellisland 21st October, 1789.

Wow, but your letter made me vauntie!
And are ye hale, and weel, and cantie?
I ken'd it still your wee bit jauntie,
Wad bring ye to:
Lord send you aye as weel's I want ye,
And then ye'll do.

The ill-thief blaw the Heron south!
And never drink be near his drouth!
He tauld mysel by word o' mouth,
He'd tak my letter;
I lippen'd to the chiel in trouth,
And bade nae better

But aiblins honest Master Heron,
Had at the time some dainty fair one,
To ware his theologic care on,
And holy study;
And tired o' sauls to waste his lear on,
E'en tried the body. *

But what d'ye think, my trusty fier,
I'm turn'd a gauger—Peace be here!
Parnassian queens, I fear, I fear,
Ye'll now disdain me,
And then my fifty pounds a-year
Will little gain me.

Ye glaiket, gleesome, dainty damies,
Wha by Castalia's wimplin streamies,
Lowp, sing, and lave your pretty limbies,
Ye ken, ye ken,
That strang necessity supreme is
'Mang sons o' men.

I hae a wife and twa wee laddies,
They maun hae brose and brats o' duddies:
Ye ken yoursel my heart right proud is,
I needna vaunt,
But I'll sned besoms—thraw saugh woodies,
Before they want.

Lord help me through this warld o' care!
I'm weary sick o't late and air!
Not but I hae a richer share
Than mony ithers;
But why should ae man better fare,
And a' men brithers!

Come FIRM RESOLVE take thou the van,
Thou stalk o' carl-hemp in man!
And let us mind, faint heart ne'er wan
A lady fair:
Wha does the utmost that he can,
Will whyles do mair.

But to conclude my silly rhyme,
(I'm scant o' verse, and scant o' time),
To make a happy fire-side clime
To weans and wife,
That's the true pathos and sublime
Of human life.

My compliments to sister Beckie;
And eke the same to honest Lucky;
I wat she is a dainty chuckie,
As e'er tread clay!
And gratefully my gude auld cockie,
I'm your's for aye.
ROBERT BURNS.

* Mr. Heron, author of the History of Scotland; and among various other works, of a respectable life of our poet himself.

No. CXXXI.

TO CAPTAIN RIDDEL, CARSE.

SIR, *Ellisland, Oct.* 16, 1789.

BIG with the idea of this important day * at Friars Carse, I have watched the elements and skies in the full persuasion that they would announce it to the astonished world by some phenomena of terrific portent.—Yesternight until a very late hour did I wait with anxious horror, for the appearance of some Comet firing half the sky; or aerial armies of sanguinary Scandinavians, darting athwart the startled heavens rapid as the ragged lightning, and horrid as those convulsions of nature that bury nations.

The elements, however, seem to take the matter very quietly: they did not even usher in this morning with triple suns and a shower of blood, symbolical of the three potent heroes, and the mighty claret-shed of the day.—For me, as Thomson in his Winter says of the storm—I shall "Hear astonished, and astonished sing,"

The whistle and the man; I sing
The man that won the whistle, &c.

* The day on which "the Whistle" was contended for.

No. CXXXII.

TO THE SAME.

SIR,

I WISH from my inmost soul it were in my power to give you a more substantial gratifica-

tion and return for all your goodness to the poet, than transcribing a few of his idle rhymes.—However, "an old song," though to a proverb an instance of insignificance, is generally the only coin a poet has to pay with.

If my poems which I have transcribed, and mean still to transcribe into your book, were equal to the grateful respect and high esteem I bear for the gentleman to whom I present them, they would be the finest poems in the language. —As they are, they will at least be a testimony with what sincerity I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your devoted humble servant.

No. CXXXIII.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

Ellisland, Nov. 1, 1789.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

I HAD written you long ere now, could I have guessed where to find you, for I am sure you have more good sense than to waste the precious days of vacation time in the dirt of business and Edinburgh.—Wherever you are, God bless you, and lead you not into temptation, but deliver you from evil!

I do not know if I have informed you that I am now appointed to an excise division, in the middle of which my house and farm lie. In this I was extremely lucky. Without ever having been an expectant, as they call their journeymen excisemen, I was directly planted down to all intents and purposes an officer of excise; there to flourish and bring forth fruits—worthy of repentance.

I know not how the word exciseman, or still more opprobrious, gauger, will sound in your ears. I too have seen the day when my auditory nerves would have felt very delicately on this subject; but a wife and children are things which have a wonderful power in blunting these kind of sensations. Fifty pounds a year for life, and a provision for widows and orphans, you will allow is no bad settlement for a *poet*. For the ignominy of the profession, I have the encouragement which I once heard a recruiting sergeant give to a numerous, if not a respectable audience, in the streets of Kilmarnock. —"Gentlemen, for your further and better encouragement, I can assure you that our regiment is the most blackguard corps under the crown, and consequently with us an honest fellow has the surest chance for preferment."

You need not doubt that I find several very unpleasant and disagreeable circumstances in my business; but I am tired with and disgusted at the language of complaint against the evils of life. Human existence in the most favourable situations does not abound with pleasures, and has its inconveniences and ills; capricious foolish man mistakes these inconveniences and ills as if they were the peculiar property of his particular situation; and hence that eternal fickleness, that love of change, which has ruined, and daily does ruin many a fine fellow, as well as many a blockhead; and is almost, without exception, a constant source of disappointment and misery.

I long to hear from you how you go on—not so much in business as in life. Are you pretty well satisfied with your own exertions, and tolerably at ease in your internal reflections? 'Tis much to be a great character as a lawyer, but beyond comparison more to be a great character as a man. That you may be both the one and the other is the earnest wish, and that you *will* be both is the firm persuasion of,

My dear Sir, &c.

No. CXXXIV.

TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ. OF FINTRY.

SIR, *9th December*, 1789.

I HAVE a good while had a wish to trouble you with a letter, and had certainly done it long ere now—but for a humiliating something that throws cold water on the resolution, as if one should say, "You have found Mr. Graham a very powerful and kind friend indeed, and that interest he is so kindly taking in your concerns, you ought by every thing in your power to keep alive and cherish." Now though, since God has thought proper to make one powerful and another helpless, the connexion of obliger and obliged is all fair; and though my being under your patronage is to me highly honourable, yet, Sir, allow me to flatter myself, that, as a poet and an honest man, you first interested yourself in my welfare, and principally as such still, you permit me to approach you.

I have found the excise business go on a great deal smoother with me than I expected; owing a good deal to the generous friendship of Mr. Mitchell, my collector, and the kind assistance of Mr. Findlater, my supervisor. I dare to be honest, and I fear no labour. Nor do I find my hurried life greatly inimical to my correspondence with the Muses. Their visits to me, indeed, and I believe to most of their acquaintance, like the visits of good angels, are short and far between; but I meet them now and then as I jog through the hills of Nithsdale, just as I used to do on the banks of Ayr. I take the liberty to enclose you a few bagatelles, all of them the productions of my leisure thoughts in my excise rides.

If you know or have ever seen Captain Grose, the antiquarian, you will enter into any humour that is in the verses on him. Perhaps you have seen them before, as I sent them to a London newspaper. Though I dare say you have none

of the solemn-league-and-covenant fire, which shone so conspicuous in Lord George Gordon, and the Kilmarnock weavers, yet I think you must have heard of Dr. M'Gill, one of the clergymen of Ayr, and his heretical book. God help him, poor man! Though he is one of the worthiest, as well as one of the ablest of the whole priesthood of the Kirk of Scotland, in every sense of that ambiguous term, yet the poor Doctor and his numerous family are in imminent danger of being thrown out to the mercy of the winter-winds. The enclosed ballad on that business is, I confess, too local, but I laughed myself at some conceits in it, though I am convinced in my conscience, that there are a good many heavy stanzas in it too.

The election ballad, as you will see, alludes to the present canvass in our string of boroughs. I do not believe there will be such a hard run match in the whole general election.*

. . . . . .

I am too little a man to have any political attachments; I am deeply indebted to, and have the warmest veneration for, individuals of both parties; but a man who has it in his power to be the father of a country, and who ——————— is a character that one cannot speak of with patience.

Sir J. J. does "what man can do," but yet I doubt his fate.

. . . . . .

No. CXXXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 13th December, 1789.

Many thanks, dear Madam, for your sheetful of Rhymes. Though at present I am below the veriest prose, yet from you every thing pleases. I am groaning under the miseries of a diseased nervous system; a system, the state of which is most conducive to our happiness—or the most productive of our misery. For now near three weeks I have been so ill with a nervous head-ache, that I have been obliged to give up, for a time, my excise books, being scarce able to lift my head, much less to ride once a-week over ten muir parishes. What is Man! To-day, in the luxuriance of health, exulting in the enjoyment of existence; in a few days, perhaps in a few hours, loaded with conscious painful being, counting the tardy pace of the lingering moments by the repercussions of anguish, and refusing or denied a comforter. Day follows night, and night comes after day, only to curse him with life which gives him no pleasure; and yet the awful, dark termination of that life, is a something at which he recoils.

"Tell us, ye dead; will none of you in pity
Disclose the secret———
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be!
——————— 'tis no matter:
A little time will make us learn'd as you are."

Can it be possible, that when I resign this frail, feverish being, I shall still find myself in conscious existence! When the last gasp of agony has announced, that I am no more to those that knew me, and the few who loved me: when the cold, stiffened, unconscious, ghastly corse is resigned into the earth, to be the prey of unsightly reptiles, and to become in time a trodden clod, shall I yet be warm in life, seeing and seen, enjoying and enjoyed? Ye venerable sages, and holy flamens, is there probability in your conjectures, truth in your stories of another world beyond death: or are they all alike, baseless visions, and fabricated fables? If there is another life, it must be only for the just, the benevolent, the amiable, and the humane; what a flattering idea, then, is the world to come? Would to God I as firmly believed it, as I ardently wish it! There I should meet an aged parent, now at rest from the many buffetings of an evil world, against which he so long and so bravely struggled. There should I meet the friend, the disinterested friend of my early life; the man who rejoiced to see me, because he loved me and could serve me.——Muir! thy weaknesses were the aberrations of human nature, but thy heart glowed with every thing generous, manly, and noble; and if ever emanation from the All-good Being animated a human form, it was thine!—There should I with speechless agony of rapture, again recognize my lost, my ever dear Mary! whose bosom was fraught with truth, honour, constancy, and love.

My Mary, dear departed shade!
Where is thy place of heavenly rest?
Seest thou thy lover lowly laid?
Hear'st thou the groans that rend his breast?

Jesus Christ, thou amiablest of characters! I trust thou art no impostor, and that thy revelation of blissful scenes of existence beyond death and the grave, is not one of the many impositions which time after time have been palmed on credulous mankind. I trust that in thee, "shall all the families of the earth be blessed," by being yet connected together in a better world, where every tie that bound heart to heart, in this state of existence, shall be, far beyond our present conceptions, more endearing.

I am a good deal inclined to think with those who maintain, that what are called nervous affections are in fact diseases of the mind. I cannot reason, I cannot think; and but to you I would not venture to write any thing above an

* This alludes to the contest for the borough of Dumfries, between the Duke of Queensberry's interest and that of Sir James Johnstone.

order to a cobbler. You have felt too much of the ills of life not to sympathize with a diseased wretch, who has impaired more than half of any faculties he possessed. Your goodness will excuse this distracted scrawl, which the writer dare scarcely read, and which he would throw into the fire, were he able to write any thing better, or indeed any thing at all.

Rumour told me something of a son of yours who was returned from the East or West Indies. If you have gotten news of James or Anthony, it was cruel in you not to let me know; as I promise you, on the sincerity of a man, who is weary of one world and anxious about another, that scarce any thing could give me so much pleasure as to hear of any good thing befalling my honoured friend.

If you have a minute's leisure, take up your pen in pity to *le pauvre miserable*. R. B.

No. CXXXVI.

TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR.

SIR,

THE following circumstance has, I believe, been omitted in the statistical account, transmitted to you, of the parish of Dunscore, in Nithsdale. I beg leave to send it to you, because it is new and may be useful. How far it is deserving of a place in your patriotic publication, you are the best judge.

To store the minds of the lower classes with useful knowledge, is certainly of very great importance, both to them as individuals, and to society at large. Giving them a turn for reading and reflection, is giving them a source of innocent and laudable amusement; and besides raises them to a more dignified degree in the scale of rationality. Impressed with this idea, a gentleman in this parish, Robert Riddel, Esq. of Glenriddel, set on foot a species of circulating liberary, on a plan so simple as to be practicable in any corner of the country; and so useful, as to deserve the notice of every country gentleman, who thinks the improvement of that part of his own species, whom chance has thrown into the humble walks of the peasant and the artizan, a matter worthy of his attention.

Mr. Riddel got a number of his own tenants, and farming neighbours, to form themselves into a society for the purpose of having a library among themselves. They entered into a legal engagement to abide by it for three years; with a saving clause or two, in case of removal to a distance, or of death. Each member, at his entry, paid five shillings, and at each of their meetings, which were held every fourth Saturday, sixpence more. With their entry-money, and the credit which they took on the faith of their future funds, they laid in a tolerable stock of books at the commencement. What authors they were to purchase, was always decided by the majority. At every meeting, all the books, under certain fines and forfeitures, by way of penalty, were to be produced; and the members had their choice of the volumes in rotation. He whose name stood, for that night, first on the list, had his choice of what volume he pleased in the whole collection; the second had his choice after the first; the third after the second, and so on to the last. At next meeting, he who had been first on the list at the preceding meeting, was last at this; he who had been second was first; and so on through the whole three years. At the expiration of the engagement, the books were sold by auction, but only among the members themselves: and each man had his share of the common stock, in money or in books, as he chose to be a purchaser or not.

At the breaking up of this little society, which was formed under Mr. Riddel's patronage, what with benefactions of books from him, and what with their own purchases, they had collected together upwards of one hundred and fifty volumes. It will easily be guessed, that a good deal of trash would be bought. Among the books, however, of this little library, were *Blair's Sermons, Robertson's History of Scotland, Hume's History of the Stuarts, the Spectator, Idler, Adventurer, Mirror, Lounger, Observer, Man of Feeling, Man of the World, Chrysal, Don Quixotte, Joseph Andrews, &c.* A peasant who can read, and enjoy such books, is certainly a much superior being to his neighbour, who perhaps stalks beside his team, very little removed, except in shape, from the brute he drives.

Wishing your patriotic exertions their so much merited success, I am,

Sir,

Your humble servant,

A PEASANT.*

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* The above is extracted from the third volume of Sir John Sinclair's Statistics, p. 598.—It was enclosed to Sir John by Mr. Riddel himself in the following letter, also printed there:—

"SIR JOHN,

"I enclose you a letter, written by Mr. Burns as an addition to the account of Dunscore parish. It contains an account of a small library which he was so good (at my desire), as to set on foot, in the barony of Monkland, or Friar's Carse, in this parish. As its utility has been felt, particularly among the younger class of people, I think, that if a similar plan were established, in the different parishes of Scotland, it would tend greatly to the speedy improvement of the tenantry, trades people, and work people. Mr. Burns was so good as to take the whole charge of this small concern. He was treasurer, librarian, and censor to this little society, who will long have a grateful sense of his public spirit and exertions for their improvement and information.

"I have the honour to be, Sir John,

"Yours most sincerely,

"ROBERT RIDDEL."

To Sir John Sinclair, of Ulbster, Bart.

LETTERS, 1790.

No. CXXXVII.

TO MR. GILBERT BURNS.

Ellisland, 11th January, 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I MEAN to take advantage of the frank, though I have not in my present frame of mind much appetite for exertion in writing. My nerves are in a . . . . state. I feel that horrid hypochondria pervading every atom of both body and soul. This farm has undone my enjoyment of myself. It is a ruinous affair on all hands. But let it go to . . . ! I'll fight it out and be off with it.

We have gotten a set of very decent players here just now. I have seen them an evening or two. David Campbell, in Ayr, wrote to me by the manager of the company, a Mr. Sutherland, who is a man of apparent worth. On New-year-day evening I gave him the following prologue, which he spouted to his audience with applause.

PROLOGUE.

No song nor dance I bring from yon great city,
That queens it o'er our taste—the more's the pity:
Though, by the bye, abroad why will you roam?
Good sense and taste are natives here at home;
But not for panegyric I appear,
I come to wish you all a good new year!
Old Father Time deputes me here before ye,
Not for to preach, but tell his simple story:
The sage grave ancient cough'd, and bade me say,
"You're one year older this important day,"
If *wiser too*—he hinted some suggestion,
But 'twould be rude, you know, to ask the question;
And with a would-be-roguish leer and wink,
He bade me on you press this one word—
"THINK!"

Ye sprightly youths, quite flush with hope and spirit,
Who think to storm the world by dint of merit,
To you the dotard has a deal to say,
In his sly, dry, sententious, proverb way!
He bids you mind, amid your thoughtless rattle,
That the first blow is ever half the battle;
That though some by the skirt may try to snatch him,
Yet by the forelock is the hold to catch him,
That whether doing, suffering, or forbearing,
You may do miracles by persevering.

Last, though not least in love, ye youthful fair,
Angelic forms, high Heaven's peculiar care!
To you old Bald-pate smooths his wrinkled brow,
And humbly begs you'll mind the important—NOW!
To crown your happiness, he asks your leave,
And offers, bliss to give and to receive.

For our sincere, though haply weak endeavours,
With grateful pride we own your many favours:
And howsoe'er our tongues may ill reveal it,
Believe our glowing bosoms truly feel it.

. . . . . .

I can no more.—If once I was clear of this . . . . farm, I should respire more at ease.

No. CXXXVIII.

FROM WILLIAM BURNS, THE POET'S BROTHER.

DEAR BROTHER, *Newcastle, 24th Jan.* 1790.

I WROTE you about six weeks ago, and I have expected to hear from you every post since, but I suppose your excise business which you hinted at in your last, has prevented you from writing. By the bye, when and how have you got into the excise; and what division have you got about Dumfries? These questions please answer in your next, if more important matter do not occur. But in the mean time let me have the letter to John Murdoch, which Gilbert wrote me you meant to send; enclose it in your's to me, and let me have them as soon as possible, for I intend to sail for London, in a fortnight, or three weeks at farthest.

You promised me when I was intending to go to Edinburgh, to write me some instructions about behaviour in companies rather above my station, to which I might be eventually introduced. As I may be introduced into such companies at Murdoch's, or on his account, when I go to London, I wish you would write me some such instructions now: I never had more need of them, for having spent little of my time in company of any sort since I came to Newcastle, I have almost forgot the common civilities of life. To these instructions pray add some of a moral kind, for though (either through the strength of early impressions, or the frigidity of my constitution), I have hitherto withstood the temptation to those vices, to which young fellows of my station and time of life are so much addicted, yet, I do not know if my virtue will be able to withstand the more powerful temptations of the metropolis: yet, through God's assistance and your instructions, I hope to weather the storm.

Give the compliments of the season and my love to my sisters, and all the rest of your family. Tell Gilbert, the first time you write him, that I am well, and that I will write him either when I sail or when I arrive at London.

I am, &c.

W. B.

No. CXXXIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 25th January, 1790.

It has been owing to unremitting hurry of business that I have not written to you, Madam, long ere now. My health is greatly better, and I now begin once more to share in satisfaction and enjoyment with the rest of my fellow-creatures.

Many thanks, my much esteemed friend, for your kind letters; but why will you make me run the risk of being contemptible and mercenary in my own eyes! When I pique myself on my independent spirit, I hope it is neither poetic license, nor poetic rant; and I am so flattered with the honour you have done me, in making me your compeer in friendship and friendly correspondence, that I cannot without pain, and a degree of mortification, be reminded of the real inequality between our situations.

Most sincerely do I rejoice with you, dear Madam, in the good news of Anthony. Not only your anxiety about his fate, but my own esteem for such a noble, warm-hearted, manly young fellow, in the little I had of his acquaintance, has interested me deeply in his fortunes.

Falconer, the unfortunate author of the *Shipwreck*, which you so much admire, is no more. After weathering the dreadful catastrophe he so feelingly describes in his poem, and after weathering many hard gales of fortune, he went to the bottom with the Aurora frigate! I forget what part of Scotland had the honour of giving him birth, but he was the son of obscurity and misfortune.* He was one of those daring adventurous spirits, which Scotland beyond any other country is remarkable for producing. Little does the fond mother think, as she hangs delighted over the sweet little leech at her bosom, where the poor fellow may hereafter wander, and what may be his fate. I remember a stanza in an old Scottish ballad, which, notwithstanding its rude simplicity, speaks feelingly to the heart.—

"Little did my mother think,
That day she cradled me,
What land I was to travel in,
Or what death I should die."

Old Scottish songs are, you know, a favourite study and pursuit of mine; and now I am on that subject, allow me to give you two stanzas of another old simple ballad, which I am sure will please you. The catastrophe of the piece is a poor ruined female, lamenting her fate. She concludes with this pathetic wish:

"O that my father had ne'er on me smiled;
O that my mother had ne'er to me sung!
O that my cradle had never been rock'd;
But that I had died when I was young!

O that the grave it were my bed;
My blankets were my winding sheet;
The clocks and the worms my bedfellows a';
And O sae sound as I should sleep!"

I do not remember in all my reading to have met with any thing more truly the language of misery, than the exclamation in the last line. Misery is like love; to speak its language truly, the author must have felt it.

I am every day expecting the doctor to give your little god-son* the small-pox. They are *rife* in the country, and I tremble for his fate. By the way, I cannot help congratulating you on his looks and spirit. Every person who sees him, acknowledges him to be the finest, handsomest child he has ever seen. I am myself delighted with the manly swell of his little chest, and a certain miniature dignity in the carriage of his head, and glance of his fine black eye, which promise the undaunted gallantry of an independent mind.

I thought to have sent you some rhymes, but time forbids. I promise you poetry until you are tired of it, next time I have the honour of assuring you how truly I am, &c.

No. CXL.

FROM MR. CUNNINGHAM.

28th January, 1790.

In some instances it is reckoned unpardonable to quote any one's own words; but the value I have for your friendship, nothing can more truly or more elegantly express, than

"Time but the impression stronger makes,
As streams their channels deeper wear."

Having written to you twice without having

* Falconer was in early life a sea-boy, to use a word of Shakspeare, on board a man-of-war, in which capacity he attracted the notice of Campbell, the author of the satire on Dr. Johnson, entitled *Lexiphanes*, then purser of the ship. Campbell took him as his servant, and delighted in giving him instruction; and when Falconer afterwards acquired celebrity, boasted of him as his scholar. The editor had this information from a surgeon of a man-of-war, in 1777, who knew both Campbell and Falconer, and who himself perished soon after by shipwreck, on the coast of America.

Though the death of Falconer happened so lately as 1770 or 1771, yet in the biography prefixed by Dr. Anderson to his works, in the complete edition of the *Poets of Great Britain*, it is said, "Of the family, birth-place, and education of William Falconer, there are no memorials." On the authority already given, it may be mentioned, that he was a native of one of the towns on the coast of Fife, and that his parents, who had suffered some misfortunes, removed to one of the sea-ports of England, where they both died, soon after, of an epidemic fever, leaving poor Falconer, then a boy, forlorn and destitute. In consequence of which he entered on board a man-of-war. These last circumstances are however less certain.—Cromek.

* The bard's second son, Francis.

heard from you, I am apt to think my letters have miscarried. My conjecture is only framed upon the chapter of accidents turning up against me, as it too often does, in the trivial, and I may with truth add, the more important affairs of life: but I shall continue occasionally to inform you what is going on among the circle of your friends in these parts. In these days of merriment, I have frequently heard your name *proclaimed* at the jovial board—under the roof of our hospitable friend at Stenhouse Mills, there were no

"Lingering moments number'd with care."

I saw your *Address to the New-year* in the Dumfries Journal. Of your productions I shall say nothing, but my acquaintance allege that when your name is mentioned, which every man of celebrity must know often happens, I am the champion, the Mendoza, against all snarling critics, and narrow-minded reptiles, of whom *a few* on this planet do *crawl*.

With best compliments to your wife, and her black-eyed sister, I remain, yours, &c.

No. CXLI.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

Ellisland, Feb. 2. 1790.

No! I will not say one word about apologies or excuses for not writing—I am a poor, rascally gauger, condemned to gallop at least 200 miles every week to inspect dirty ponds and yeasty barrels, and where can I find time to write to, or importance to interest any body? The upbraidings of my conscience, nay the upbraidings of my wife, have persecuted me on your account these two or three months past.—I wish to God I was a great man, that my correspondence might throw light upon you, to let the world see what you really are; and then I would make your fortune, without putting my hand in my pocket for you, which, like all other great men, I suppose I would avoid as much as possible. What are you doing, and how are you doing? Have you lately seen any of my few friends? What is become of the BOROUGH REFORM, or how is the fate of my poor namesake Mademoiselle Burns decided? O man! but for thee and thy selfish appetites, and dishonest artifices, that beauteous form, and that once innocent and still ingenuous mind might have shone conspicuous and lovely in the faithful wife, and the affectionate mother; and shall the unfortunate sacrifice to thy pleasures have no claim on thy humanity!

I saw lately in a Review, some extracts from a new poem, called The Village Curate; send it me. I want likewise a cheap copy of The World. Mr. Armstrong, the young poet, who does me the honour to mention me so kindly in his works, please give him my best thanks for the copy of his book—I shall write him, my first leisure hour. I like his poetry much, but I think his style in prose quite astonishing.

. . . . . .

Your book came safe, and I am going to trouble you with farther commissions. I call it troubling you—because I want only, BOOKS; the cheapest way, the best; so you may have to hunt for them in the evening auctions. I want Smollett's Works, for the sake of his incomparable humour. I have already Roderick Random, and Humphrey Clinker.—Peregrine Pickle, Launcelot Greaves, and Frederick, Count Fathom, I still want; but as I said, the veriest ordinary copies will serve me. I am nice only in the appearance of my poets. I forget the price of Cowper's Poems, but, I believe, I must have them. I saw the other day, proposals for a publication, entitled, "Banks's new and complet Christian's Family Bible," printed for C. Cooke, Paternoster-row, London.—He promises at least, to give in the work, I think it is three hundred and odd engravings, to which he has put the names of the first artists in London.*—You will know the character of the performance, as some numbers of it are published; and if it is really what it pretends to be, set me down as a subscriber, and send me the published numbers.

Let me hear from you, your first leisure minute, and trust me, you shall in future have no reason to complain of my silence. The dazzling perplexity of novelty will dissipate and leave me to pursue my course in the quiet path of methodical routine.

No. CXLII.

TO MR. W. NICOLL.

MY DEAR SIR, *Ellisland, Feb.* 9, 1790.

THAT d—mned mare of yours is dead. I would freely have given her price to have saved

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* Perhaps no set of men more effectually avail themselves of the easy credulity of the public, than a certain description of Paternoster-row booksellers. Three hundred and odd engravings!—and by the *first artists* in London, too! No wonder that Burns was dazzled by the splendour of the promise. It is no unusual thing for this class of impostors to *illustrate* the *Holy Scriptures* by plates originally engraved for the *History of England*, and I have actually seen subjects designed by our celebrated artist Stothard, from *Clarissa Harlowe* and the *Novelist's Magazine*, converted, with incredible dexterity, by these Bookselling-Breslaws, into *Scriptural embellishments!* One of these venders of 'Family Bibles' lately called on me, to consult me professionally, about a folio engraving he brought with him.—It represented MONS. BUFFON, seated, contemplating various groups of animals that surrounded him: He merely wished, he said, to be informed, whether by *uncloathing* the Naturalist, and

her: she has vexed me beyond description. Indebted as I was to your goodness beyond what I can ever repay, I eagerly grasped at your offer to have the mare with me. That I might at least shew my readiness in wishing to be grateful, I took every care of her in my power. She was never crossed for riding above half a score of times by me or in my keeping. I drew her in the plough, one of three, for one poor week. I refused fifty-five shillings for her, which was the highest bode I could squeeze for her. I fed her up and had her in fine order for Dumfries fair; when four or five days before the fair, she was seized with an unaccountable disorder in the sinews, or somewhere in the bones of the neck; with a weakness or total want of power in her fillets, and in short the whole vertebræ of her spine seemed to be diseased and unhinged, and in eight and forty hours, in spite of the two best farriers in the country, she died and be d–mned to her! The farriers said that she had been quite strained in the fillets beyond cure before you had bought her, and that the poor devil, though she might keep a little flesh, had been jaded and quite worn out with fatigue and oppression. While she was with me, she was under my own eye, and I assure you, my much valued friend, every thing was done for her that could be done; and the accident has vexed me to the heart. In fact I could not pluck up spirits to write you, on account of the unfortunate business.

There is little new in this country. Our theatrical company, of which you must have heard, leave us in a week. Their merit and character are indeed very great, both on the stage and in private life; not a worthless creature among them; and their encouragement has been accordingly. Their usual run is from eighteen to twenty-five pounds a night; seldom less than the one, and the house will hold no more than the other. There have been repeated instances of sending away six, and eight, and ten pounds in a night for want of room. A new theatre is to be built by subscription; the first stone is to be laid on Friday first to come.* Three hundred guineas have been raised by thirty subscribers, and thirty more might have been got if wanted. The manager, Mr. Sutherland, was introduced to me by a friend from Ayr; and a worthier or cleverer fellow I have rarely met with. Some of our clergy have slipt in by stealth now and then; but they have got up a farce of their own. You must have heard how the Rev. Mr. Lawson of Kirkmahoe, seconded by the Rev. Mr. Kirkpatrick of Dunscore, and the rest of that faction, have accused in formal process, the unfortunate and Rev. Mr. Heron of Kirkgunzeon, that in ordaining Mr. Nelson to the cure of souls in Kirkbean, he, the said Heron, feloniously and treasonably bound the said Nelson to the confession of faith, *so far as it was agreeable to reason and the word of God!*

Mrs. B. begs to be remembered most gratefully to you. Little Bobby and Frank are charmingly well and healthy. I am jaded to death with fatigue. For these two or three months, on an average, I have not ridden less than two hundred miles per week. I have done little in the poetic way. I have given Mr. Sutherland two Prologues; one of which was delivered last week. I have likewise strung four or five barbarous stanzas, to the tune of Chevy Chase, by way of Elegy on your poor unfortunate mare, beginning,—

"Peg Nicholson was a good Bay-mare,"—
(*see p.* 77.)

My best compliments to Mrs. Nicoll, and little Neddy, and all the family. I hope Ned is a good scholar, and will come out to gather nuts and apples with me next harvest.

giving him a rather more *resolute* look, the plate could not, at a trifling expense, be made to pass for "DANIEL IN THE LIONS' DEN!"—CROMEK.

* *On Friday first to come*—a Scotticism.

No. CXLIII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Ellisland, 13th February, 1790.

I BEG your pardon, my dear and much valued friend, for writing to you on this very unfashionable, unsightly sheet—

"My poverty but not my will consents."

But to make amends, since of modish post I have none, except one poor widowed half sheet of gilt, which lies in my drawer among my plebeian foolscap pages, like the widow of a man of fashion, whom that unpolite scoundrel, Necessity, has driven from Burgundy and Pine-apple, to a dish of Bohea, with the scandal-bearing help-mate of a village priest; or a glass of whisky-toddy, with the ruby-nosed yoke-fellow of a foot-padding exciseman—I make a vow to enclose this sheet-full of epistolary fragments in that my only scrap of gilt-paper.

I am indeed your unworthy debtor for three friendly letters. I ought to have written to you long ere now, but it is a literal fact, I have scarcely a spare moment. It is not that I *will not* write to you; Miss Burnet is not more dear to her guardian angel, nor his grace the Duke of ——— to the powers of ———, than my friend Cunningham to me. It is not that I *cannot* write to you; should you doubt it, take the following fragment which was intended for you some time ago, and be convinced that I can *antithesize* sentiment, and *circumvolute* periods, as well as any coiner of phrase in the regions of philology.

. . . . . .

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM, *December*, 1789.

Where are you? And what are you doing? Can you be that son of levity, who takes up a friendship as he takes up a fashion; or are you, like some other of the worthiest fellows in the world, the victim of indolence, laden with fetters of ever-increasing weight.

What strange beings we are! Since we have a portion of conscious existence, equally capable of enjoying pleasure, happiness, and rapture, or of suffering pain, wretchedness, and misery, it is surely worthy of an inquiry, whether there be not such a thing as a science of life; whether method, economy, and fertility of expedients be not applicable to enjoyment; and whether there be not a want of dexterity in pleasure, which renders our little scantling of happiness still less; and a profuseness, an intoxication in bliss which leads to satiety, disgust, and self-abhorrence. There is not a doubt but that health, talents, character, decent competency, respectable friends, are real substantial blessings; and yet do we not daily see those who enjoy many or all of these good things, contrive, notwithstanding, to be as unhappy as others to whose lot few of them have fallen. I believe one great source of this mistake or misconduct is owing to a certain stimulus, with us called ambition, which goads us up the hill of life, not as we ascend other eminences, for the laudable curiosity of viewing an extended landscape, but rather for the dishonest pride of looking down on others of our fellow-creatures, seemingly diminutive, in humble stations, &c. &c.

. . . . . .

Sunday, 14*th February*, 1790.

GOD help me! I am now obliged to join

"Night to day, and Sunday to the week."

If there be any truth in the orthodox faith of these churches, I am ——— past redemption, and what is worse, ——— to all eternity. I am deeply read in *Boston's Fourfold State*, *Marshall on Sanctification*, *Gutherie's Trial of a Saving Interest*, &c. but "There is no balm in Gilead, there is no physician there," for me; so I shall e'en turn Arminian, and trust to "Sincere, though imperfect obedience."

. . . . . .

Tuesday, 16*th*.

LUCKILY for me I was prevented from the discussion of the knotty point at which I had just made a full stop. All my fears and cares are of this world: if there is another, an honest man has nothing to fear from it. I hate a man that wishes to be a Deist, but I fear, every fair, unprejudiced inquirer must in some degree be a sceptic. It is not that there are any very staggering arguments against the immortality of man; but like electricity, phlogiston, &c. the subject is so involved in darkness, that we want data to go upon. One thing frightens me much; that we are to live for ever, seems *too good news to be true*. That we are to enter into a new scene of existence, where, exempt from want and pain, we shall enjoy ourselves and our friends without satiety or separation—how much should I be indebted to any one who could fully assure me that this was certain!

. . . . . .

My time is once more expired. I will write to Mr. Cleghorn soon. God bless him and all his concerns! And may all the powers that preside over conviviality and friendship, be present with all their kindest influence, when the bearer of this, Mr. Syme, and you meet! I wish I could also make one.—I think we should be . . . . .

Finally, brethren, farewell! Whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are gentle, whatsoever things are charitable, whatsoever things are kind, think on these things, and think on

ROBERT BURNS.

No. CXLIV.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

Ellisland, 2*d March*, 1790.

AT a late meeting of the Monkland Friendly Society, it was resolved to augment their library by the following books, which you are to send us as soon as possible:—*The Mirror*, *The Lounger*, *Man of Feeling*, *Man of the World*, (these for my own sake I wish to have by the first carrier) *Knox's History of the Reformation*; *Rae's History of the Rebellion in* 1715; any good *History of the Rebellion in* 1745; *A Display of the Secession Act and Testimony*, by Mr. GIBB; *Hervey's Meditations*; *Beveridge's Thoughts*; and another copy of *Watson's Body of Divinity*.

I wrote to Mr. A. Masterton three or four months ago, to pay some money he owed me into your hands, and lately I wrote to you to the same purpose, but I have heard from neither one nor other of you.

In addition to the books I commissioned in my last, I want very much, *An Index to the Excise Laws, or an abridgment of all the Statutes now in force, relative to the Excise*, by Jellinger Symons: I want three copies of this book; if it is now to be had, cheap or dear, get it for me. An honest country neighbour of mine wants, too, *A Family Bible*, the larger the better, but second-handed, for he does not choose to give above ten shillings for the book. I want likewise for myself, as you can pick them up, second-handed or cheap, copies of

Otway's Dramatic Works, Ben Jonson's, Dryden's, Congreve's, Wycherley's, Vanbrugh's, Cibber's, or any *Dramatic Works* of the more modern—*Macklin, Garrick, Foote, Colman,* or *Sheridan.* A good copy too of *Moliere,* in French, I much want. Any other good dramatic authors in that language I want also; but comic authors chiefly, though I should wish to have *Racine, Corneille,* and *Voltaire* too. I am in no hurry for all, or any of these, but if you accidentally meet with them very cheap, get them for me.

And now, to quit the dry walk of business, how do you do, my dear friend? and how is Mrs. Hill? I trust if now and then not so *elegantly* handsome, at least as amiable, and sings as divinely as ever. My good-wife too has a charming "wood-note wild;" now could we four——

. . . . . .

I am out of all patience with this vile world, for one thing. Mankind are by nature benevolent creatures; except in a few scoundrelly instances, I do not think that avarice of the good things we chance to have, is born with us; but we are placed here amid so much nakedness, and hunger, and poverty, and want, that we are under a cursed necessity of studying selfishness, in order that we may EXIST! Still there are, in every age, a few souls, that all the wants and woes of life cannot debase to selfishness, or even to the necessary alloy of caution and prudence. If ever I am in danger of vanity, it is when I contemplate myself on this side of my disposition and character. God knows I am no saint; I have a whole host of follies and sins to answer for; but if I could, and I believe I do it as far as I can, I would wipe away all tears from all eyes. Adieu!

No. CXLV.

FROM WILLIAM BURNS, THE POET'S BROTHER.

London, 21st March, 1790.

DEAR BROTHER,

I HAVE been here three weeks come Tuesday, and would have written you sooner, but was not settled in a place of work.—We were ten days on our passage from Shields; the weather being calm I was not sick, except one day when it blew pretty hard. I got into work the Friday after I came to town, I wrought there only eight days, their job being done. I got work again in a shop in the Strand, the next day after I left my former master. It is only a temporary place, but I expect to be settled soon in a shop to my mind, although it will be a harder task than I at first imagined, for there are such swarms of fresh hands just come from the country that the town is quite overstocked, and except one is a particularly good workman, (which you know I am not, nor I am afraid ever will be), it is hard to get a place: However, I don't yet despair to bring up my lee-way, and shall endeavour if possible to sail within three or four points of the wind. The encouragement here is not what I expected, wages being very low in proportion to the expense of living, but yet, if I can only lay by the money that is spent by others in my situation in dissipation and riot, I expect soon to return you the money I borrowed of you and live comfortably besides.

In the mean time I wish you would send up all my best linen shirts to London, which you may easily do by sending them to some of your Edinburgh friends, to be shipped from Leith. Some of them are too little; don't send any but what are good, and I wish one of my sisters could find as much time as to trim my shirts at the breast, for there is no such thing to be seen here as a plain shirt, even for wearing, which is what I want these for. I mean to get one or two new shirts here for Sundays, but I assure you that linen here is a very expensive article. I am going to write to Gilbert to send me an Ayrshire cheese; if he can spare it he will send it to you, and you may send it with the shirts, but I expect to hear from you before that time. The cheese I could get here; but I will have a pride in eating Ayrshire cheese in London, and the expense of sending it will be little, as you are sending the shirts any how.

I write this by J. Stevenson, in his lodgings, while he is writing to Gilbert. He is well and hearty, which is a blessing to me as well as to him: We were at Covent Garden chapel this forenoon, to hear the *Calf* preach; he is grown very fat, and is as boisterous as ever.* There is a whole colony of Kilmarnock people here, so we don't want for acquaintance.

Remember me to my sisters and all the family. I shall give you all the observations I have made on London in my next, when I shall have seen more of it.

I am, dear Brother, yours, &c.

W. B.

No. CXLVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 10th April, 1790.

I HAVE just now, my ever-honoured friend, enjoyed a very high luxury, in reading a paper of the *Lounger.* You know my national prejudices. I had often read and admired the *Spectator, Adventurer, Rambler,* and *World;* but still with a certain regret, that they were so

* *Vide* Poetical Address to the Calf.

thoroughly and entirely English. Alas! have I often said to myself, what are all the boasted advantages which my country reaps from the Union, that can counterbalance the annihilation of her independence, and even her very name! I often repeat that couplet of my favourite poet, Goldsmith—

"—— States of native liberty possest,
Though very poor, may yet be very blest."

Nothing can reconcile me to the common terms, "English ambassador, English court," &c. And I am out of all patience to see that equivocal character, Hastings, impeached by "the Commons of England." Tell me, my friend, is this weak prejudice? I believe in my conscience such ideas, as, "my country; her independence; her honour; the illustrious names that mark the history of my native land," &c.—I believe these, among your *men of the world*—men who in fact guide for the most part and govern our world, are looked on as so many modifications of wrongheadedness. They know the use of bawling out such terms, to rouse or lead THE RABBLE; but for their own private use, with almost all the *able statesmen* that ever existed, or now exist, when they talk of right and wrong, they only mean proper and improper; and their measure of conduct is, not what they OUGHT, but what they DARE. For the truth of this I shall not ransack the history of nations, but appeal to one of the ablest judges of men, and himself one of the ablest men that ever lived—the celebrated Earl of Chesterfield. In fact, a man who could thoroughly controul his vices whenever they interfered with his interest, and who could completely put on the appearance of every virtue as often as it suited his purposes, is, on the Stanhopian plan, the *perfect man;* a man to lead nations. But are great abilities, complete without a flaw, and polished without a blemish, the standard of human excellence? This is certainly the staunch opinion of *men of the world;* but I call on honour, virtue, and worth, to give the Stygian doctrine a loud negative! However, this must be allowed, that, if you abstract from man the idea of an existence beyond the grave, *then*, the true measure of human conduct is *proper* and *improper:* Virtue and vice, as dispositions of the heart, are in that case, of scarcely the import and value to the world at large, as harmony and discord in the modifications of sound; and a delicate sense of honour, like a nice ear for music, though it may sometimes give the possessor an ecstasy unknown to the coarser organs of the herd, yet, considering the harsh gratings, and inharmonic jars, in this ill-tuned state of being, it is odds but the individual would be as happy, and certainly would be as much respected by the true judges of society, as it would then stand, without either a good ear or a good heart.

You must know I have just met with the *Mirror and Lounger* for the first time, and I am quite in raptures with them: I should be glad to have your opinion of some of the papers. The one I have just read, *Lounger*, No. 61, has cost me more honest tears than any thing I have read of a long time. M'Kenzie has been called the Addison of the Scots, and in my opinion, Addison would not be hurt at the comparison. If he has not Addison's exquisite humour, he as certainly outdoes him in the tender and the pathetic. His *Man of Feeling* (but I am not counsel-learned in the laws of criticism), I estimate as the first performance in its kind I ever saw. From what books, moral or even pious, will the susceptible young mind receive impressions more congenial to humanity and kindness, generosity and benevolence; in short, more of all that ennobles the soul to herself, or endears her to others—than from the simple affecting tale of poor Harley.

Still, with all my admiration of M'Kenzie's writings, I do not know if they are the fittest reading for a young man who is about to set out, as the phrase is, to make his way into life. Do not you think, Madam, that among the few favoured of Heaven in the structure of their minds (for such there certainly are), there may be a purity, a tenderness, a dignity, an elegance of soul, which are of no use, nay, in some degree, absolutely disqualifying for the truly important business of making a man's way into life. If I am not much mistaken, my gallant young friend, A———, is very much under these disqualifications; and for the young females of a family I could mention, well may they excite parental solicitude, for I, a common acquaintance, or as my vanity will have it, an humble friend, have often trembled for a turn of mind which may render them eminently happy—or peculiarly miserable!

I have been manufacturing some verses lately; but as I have got the most hurried season of excise business over, I hope to have more leisure to transcribe any thing that may show how much I have the honour to be, Madam, yours, &c.

No. CXLVII.

FROM MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Edinburgh, 25th May, 1790.

MY DEAR BURNS,

I AM much indebted to you for your last friendly, elegant epistle, and it shall make a part of the vanity of *my composition,* to retain your correspondence through life. It was remarkable your introducing the name of Miss Burnet, at a time when she was in such ill health; and I am sure it will grieve your gentle heart, to hear of her being in the last stage of a consumption. Alas! that so much beauty, innocence, and virtue, should be nipt in the

bud. Hers was the smile of cheerfulness—of sensibility, not of allurement; and her elegance of manners corresponded with the purity and elevation of her mind.

How does your friendly muse? I am sure she still retains her affection for you, and that you have many of her favours in your possession, which I have not seen. I weary much to hear from you.

. . . . . .

I beseech you do not forget me.

. . . . . .

I most sincerely hope all your concerns in life prosper, and that your roof-tree enjoys the blessing of good health. All your friends here are well, among whom, and *not the least*, is your acquaintance, Cleghorn. As for myself, I am well, as far as . . . . . will let a man be; but with these I am happy.

. . . . . .

When you meet with my very agreeable friend J. Syme, give him for me a hearty squeeze, and bid, God bless him.

Is there any probability of your being soon in Edinburgh?

No. CXLVIII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Dumfries, Excise-Office, 14th July, 1790.

SIR,

COMING into town this morning, to attend my duty in this office, it being collection-day, I met with a gentleman who tells me he is on his way to London; so I take the opportunity of writing to you, as franking is at present under a temporary death. I shall have some snatches of leisure through the day, amid our horrid business and bustle, and I shall improve them as well as I can; but let my letter be as stupid as . . . . . ., as miscellaneous as a newspaper, as short as a hungry grace-before-meat, or as long as a law-paper in the Douglas' cause; as ill-spelt as country John's billet-doux, or as unsightly a scrawl as Betty Byremucker's answer to it; I hope, considering circumstances, you will forgive it; and as it will put you to no expense of postage, I shall have the less reflection about it.

I am sadly ungrateful in not returning you my thanks for your most valuable present, *Zeluco*. In fact, you are in some degree blameable for my neglect. You were pleased to express a wish for my opinion of the work, which so flattered me, that nothing less would serve my over-weening fancy, than a formal criticism on the book. In fact, I have gravely planned a comparative view of you, Fielding, Richardson, and Smollett, in your different qualities and merits as novel-writers. This, I own, betrays my ridiculous vanity, and I may probably never bring the business to bear; but I am fond of the spirit young Elihu shows in the book of Job—"And I said, I will also declare my opinion." I have quite disfigured my copy of the book with my annotations. I never take it up without at the same time taking my pencil, and marking with asterisks, parenthesis, &c. wherever I meet with an original thought, a nervous remark on life and manners, a remarkably well-turned period, or a character sketched with uncommon precision.

Though I shall hardly think of fairly writing out my "Comparative View," I shall certainly trouble you with my remarks, such as they are. I have just received from my gentleman, that horrid summons in the book of Revelations—"That time shall be no more!"

The little collection of sonnets have some charming poetry in them. If *indeed* I am indebted to the fair author for the book, and not, as I rather suspect, to a celebrated author of the other sex, I should certainly have written to the lady, with my grateful acknowledgments, and my own ideas of the comparative excellence of her pieces. I would do this last, not from any vanity of thinking that my remarks could be of much consequence to Mrs. Smith, but merely from my own feelings as an author, doing as I would be done by.

No. CXLIX.

TO MR. MURDOCH,

TEACHER OF FRENCH, LONDON.

MY DEAR SIR, *Ellisland, July* 16, 1790.

I RECEIVED a letter from you a long time ago, but unfortunately as it was in the time of my peregrinations and journeyings through Scotland, I mislaid or lost it, and by consequence your direction along with it. Luckily my good star brought me acquainted with Mr. Kennedy, who, I understand, is an acquaintance of yours: and by his means and mediation I hope to replace that link which my unfortunate negligence had so unluckily broke in the chain of our correspondence. I was the more vexed at the vile accident, as my brother William, a journeyman saddler, has been for some time in London; and wished above all things for your direction, that he might have paid his respects to his FATHER'S FRIEND.

His last address he sent me was, "Wm. Burns, at Mr. Barber's, Saddler, No. 181, Strand." I write him by Mr. Kennedy, but neglected to ask him for your address; so, if you

find a spare half minute, please let my brother know by a card where and when he will find you, and the poor fellow will joyfully wait on you, as one of the few surviving friends of the man whose name, and Christian name too, he has the honour to bear.

The next letter I write you shall be a long one. I have much to tell you of "hair-breadth 'scapes in th' imminent deadly breach," with all the eventful history of a life, the early years of which owe I so much to your kind tutorage; but this at an hour of leisure. My kindest compliments to Mrs. Murdoch and family.

I am ever, my dear Sir,
Your obliged friend.*

* This letter was communicated to the Editor by a gentleman to whose liberal advice and information he is much indebted, Mr. John Murdoch, the early instructor of the poet; accompanied by the following interesting note:—

London, Hart-Street, Bloomsbury, 28th Dec. 1807.

DEAR SIR,

THE following letter, which I lately found among my papers, I copy for your perusal, partly because it is Burns's, partly because it makes honourable mention of my rational Christian friend, his father; and likewise because it is rather flattering to myself. I glory in no one thing so much as an intimacy with good men;—the friendship of others reflects no honour. When I recollect the pleasure, (and I hope benefit), I received from the conversation of WILLIAM BURNS, especially when on the Lord's day we walked together for about two miles, to the house of prayer, there publicly to adore and praise the Giver of all good, I entertain an ardent hope, that together we shall "renew the glorious theme in distant worlds," with powers more adequate to the mighty subject, THE EXUBERANT BENEFICENCE OF THE GREAT CREATOR. But to the letter:—

FROM MR. MURDOCH TO THE BARD,

GIVING HIM AN ACCOUNT OF THE DEATH OF HIS BROTHER WILLIAM.

Hart-Street, Bloomsbury-Square, London,
MY DEAR FRIEND, *Sept. 14th*, 1790.

YOURS of the 16th of July, I received on the 26th, in the afternoon, per favour of my friend Mr. Kennedy, and at the same time was informed that your brother was ill. Being engaged in business till late that evening, I set out next morning to see him, and had thought of three or four medical gentlemen of my acquaintance, to one or other of whom I might apply for advice, provided it should be necessary. But when I went to Mr. Barber's, to my great astonishment and heart-felt grief, I found that my young friend had, on Saturday, bid an everlasting farewell to all sublunary things.—It was about a fortnight before that he had found me out, by Mr. Stevenson's accidentally calling at my shop to buy something. We had only one interview, and that was highly entertaining to me in several respects. He mentioned some instruction I had given him when very young, to which he said he owed, in a great measure, the philanthropy he possessed.—He also took notice of my exhorting you all, when I wrote, about eight years ago, to the man who, of all mankind that I ever knew, stood highest in my esteem, "not to let go your integrity."—You may easily conceive that such conversation was both pleasing and encouraging to me: I anticipated a deal of rational happiness from future conversations.—Vain are our expectations and hopes They are so almost always—Perhaps, (nay, certainly), for our good. Were it not for disappointed hopes we could hardly spend a thought on another state of existence, or be in any degree reconciled to the quitting of this.

I know of no one source of consolation to those who have lost young relatives, equal to that of their being of a good disposition, and of a promising character.

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No. CL.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DEAR MADAM, *8th August*, 1790.

AFTER a long day's toil, plague, and care, I sit down to write to you. Ask me not why I have delayed it so long? It was owing to hurry, indolence, and fifty other things; in short, to any thing—but forgetfulness of *la plus aimable de son sexe*. By the bye, you are indebted your best courtesy to me for this last compliment; as I pay it from sincere conviction of its truth—a quality rather rare in compliments of these grinning, bowing, scraping times.

Well, I hope writing to *you*, will ease a little my troubled soul. Sorely has it been bruised to-day! A ci-devant friend of mine, and an intimate acquaintance of yours, has given my feelings a wound that I perceive will gangrene dangerously ere it cure. He has wounded my pride!

. . . . . .

Be assured, my dear friend, that I cordially sympathize with you all, and particularly with Mrs. W. Burns, who is undoubtedly one of the most tender and affectionate mothers that ever lived. Remember me to her in the most friendly manner, when you see her, or write.—Please present my best compliments to Mrs. R. Burns, and to your brother and sisters.—There is no occasion for me to exhort you to filial duty, and to use your united endeavours in rendering the evening of life as comfortable as possible to a mother, who has dedicated so great a part of it in promoting your temporal and spiritual welfare.

Your letter to Dr. Moore, I delivered at his house, and shall most likely know your opinion of Zeleuco, the first time I meet with him. I wish and hope for a long letter. Be particular about your mother's health. I hope she is too much a Christian to be afflicted above measure, or to sorrow as those who have no hope.

One of the most pleasing hopes I have is to visit you all; but I am commonly disappointed in what I most ardently wish for.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours sincerely,
JOHN MURDOCH.

I promised myself a deal of happiness in the conversation of my dear young friend; but my promises of this nature generally prove fallacious. Two visits were the utmost that I received. At one of them, however, he repeated a lesson which I had given him about twenty years before, when he was a mere child, concerning the pity and tenderness due to animals. To that lesson, (which it seems was brought to the level of his capacity), he declared himself indebted for almost all the philanthropy he possessed.

Let not parents and teachers imagine that it is needless to talk seriously to children. They are sooner fit to be reasoned with than is generally thought. Strong and indelible impressions are to be made before the mind be agitated and ruffled by the numerous train of distracting cares and unruly passions, whereby it is frequently rendered almost unsusceptible of the principles and precepts of rational religion and sound morality.

But I find myself digressing again. Poor William! then in the bloom and vigour of youth, caught a putrid fever, and, in a few days, as real chief mourner, I followed his remains to the land of forgetfulness.

JOHN MURDOCH.

CROMEK.

No. CLI.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Ellisland, 8th August, 1790.

Forgive me my once dear, and ever dear friend, my seeming negligence. You cannot sit down, and fancy the busy life I lead.

I laid down my goose feather to beat my brains for an apt simile, and had some thoughts of a country grannam at a family christening: a bride on the market-day before her marriage;

. . . . . .

a tavern-keeper at an election dinner; &c. &c. —but the resemblance that hits my fancy best is, that blackguard miscreant, Satan, who roams about like a roaring lion, seeking, *searching* whom he may devour. However, tossed about as I am, if I choose (and who would not choose) to bind down with the crampets of attention, the brazen foundation of integrity, I may rear up the superstructure of Independence, and from its daring turrets, bid defiance to the storms of fate. And is not this a "consummation devoutly to be wished?"

"Thy spirit, Independence, let me share;
Lord of the lion-heart, and eagle-eye!
Thy steps I follow with my bosom bare,
Nor heed the storm that howls along the sky!"

Are not these noble verses? They are the introduction of *Smollett's Ode to Independence:* If you have not seen the poem, I will send it to you. How wretched is the man that hangs on by the favours of the great. To shrink from every dignity of man, at the approach of a lordly piece of self-consequence, who, amid all his tinsel glitter, and stately hauteur, is but a creature formed as thou art—and perhaps not so well formed as thou art—came into the world a puling infant as thou didst, and must go out of it as all men must, a naked corse*.

. . . . . .

No. CLII.

FROM DR. BLACKLOCK.

Edinburgh, 1st September, 1790.

How does my dear friend?—much I languish to hear,
His fortune, relations, and all that are dear;
With love of the Muses so strongly still smitten,
I meant this epistle in verse to have written;
But from age and infirmity, indolence flows,
And this, much I fear, will restore me to prose.
Anon to my business I wish to proceed,
Dr. Anderson guides and provokes me to speed,
A man of integrity, genius and worth,
Who soon a performance intends to set forth;
A work miscellaneous, extensive, and free,
Which will weekly appear, by the name of the *Bee*.
Of this from himself I enclose you a plan,
And hope you will give what assistance you can.
Entangled with business, and haunted with care,
In which more or less human nature must share,
Some moments of leisure the Muses will claim,
A sacrifice due to amusement and fame.
The Bee, which sucks honey from ev'ry gay bloom,
With some rays of your genius her work may illume,
Whilst the flower whence her honey spontaneously flows,
As fragrantly smells, and as vig'rously grows.

Now with kind gratulations 'tis time to conclude,
And add, your promotion is here understood;
Thus free from the servile employ of excise, Sir,
We hope soon to hear you commence supervisor;
You then more at leisure, and free from control,
May indulge the strong passion that reigns in your soul.
But I, feeble I, must to nature give way;
Devoted cold death's and longevity's prey.
From verses tho' languid my thoughts must unbend,
Tho' still I remain your affectionate friend,
THO. BLACKLOCK.

No. CLIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

FROM MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Edinburgh, 14th October, 1790.

I lately received a letter from our friend B ———,—what a charming fellow lost to society—born to great expectations—with superior abilities, a pure heart and untainted morals, his fate in life has been hard indeed—still I am persuaded he is happy; not like the gallant, the gay Lothario, but in the simplicity of rural enjoyment, unmixed with regret at the remembrance of "the days of other years."

I saw Mr. Dunbar put, under the cover of your newspaper, Mr. Wood's Poem on Thomson. This poem has suggested an idea to me which you alone are capable to execute:—a song adapted to *each* season of the year. The task is difficult, but the theme is charming:

* The preceding letter explains the feelings under which this was written. The strain of indignant invective goes on some time longer in the style which our bard was too apt to indulge, and of which the reader has already seen somuch.

should you succeed, I will undertake to get new music worthy of the subject. What a fine field for your imagination, and who is there alive can draw so many beauties from Nature and pastoral imagery as yourself? It is, by the way, surprising that there does not exist, so far as I know, *a proper song* for each season. We have songs on hunting, fishing, skaiting, and one autumnal song, *Harvest Home*. As your muse is neither spavied nor rusty, you may mount the hill of Parnassus, and return with a sonnet in your pocket for every season. For my suggestions, if I be rude, correct me; if impertinent, chastise me; if presuming, despise me. But if you blend all my weaknesses, and pound out one grain of insincerity, then am I not thy

Faithful friend, &c.

No. CLIV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

November, 1790.

"As cold waters to a thirsty soul, so is good news from a far country."

Fate has long owed me a letter of good news from you, in return for the many tidings of sorrow which I have received. In this instance I most cordially obey the apostle—"Rejoice with them that do rejoice"—for me *to sing* for joy is no new thing; but *to preach* for joy, as I have done in the commencement of this epistle, is a pitch of extravagant rapture to which I never rose before.

I read your letter—I literally jumped for joy—How could such a mercurial creature as a poet, lumpishly keep his seat on the receipt of the best news from his best friend. I seized my gilt-headed Wangee rod, an instrument indispensably necessary, in my left hand, in the moment of inspiration and rapture; and stride, stride—quick and quicker—out skipt I among the broomy banks of Nith, to muse over my joy by retail. To keep within the bounds of prose was impossible. Mrs. Little's is a more elegant, but not a more sincere compliment to the sweet little fellow than I, extempore almost, poured out to him in the following verses.

(See the poem—*On the Birth of a Posthumous Child.*)

. . . . . .

I am much flattered by your approbation of my *Tam o' Shanter*, which you express in your former letter, though, by the bye, you load me in that said letter with accusations heavy and many; to all which I plead *not guilty!* Your book is, I hear, on the road to reach me. As to printing of poetry, when you prepare it for the press, you have only to spell it right, and place the capital letters properly; as to the punctuation, the printers do that themselves.

I have a copy of *Tam o' Shanter* ready to send you by the first opportunity: it is too heavy to send by post.

I heard of Mr. Corbet lately. He, in consequence of your recommendation, is most zealous to serve me. Please favour me soon with an account of your good folks; if Mrs. H. is recovering, and the young gentleman doing well.

No. CLV.

TO CRAUFORD TAIT, Esq. Edinburgh.

DEAR SIR, *Ellisland, Oct.* 15, 1790.

Allow me to introduce to your acquaintance the bearer, Mr. Wm. Duncan, a friend of mine, whom I have long known and long loved. His father, whose only son he is, has a decent little property in Ayrshire, and has bred the young man to the law, in which department he comes up an adventurer to your good town. I shall give you my friend's character in two words: as to his head, he has talents enough, and more than enough for common life; as to his heart, when nature had kneaded the kindly clay that composes it, she said, "I can no more."

You, my good Sir, were born under kinder stars; but your fraternal sympathy, I well know, can enter into the feelings of the young man, who goes into life with the laudable ambition to *do* something, and to *be* something among his fellow creatures; but whom the consciousness of friendless obscurity presses to the earth, and wounds to the soul!

Even the fairest of his virtues are against him. That independent spirit, and that ingenuous modesty, qualities inseparable from a noble mind, are, with the million, circumstances not a little disqualifying. What pleasure is in the power of the fortunate and the happy, by their notice and patronage, to brighten the countenance and glad the heart of such depressed youth! I am not so angry with mankind for their deaf economy of the purse:—The goods of this world cannot be divided, without being lessened—but why be a niggard of that which bestows bliss on a fellow-creature, yet takes nothing from our own means of enjoyment? We wrap ourselves up in the cloak of our own better-fortune, and turn away our eyes, lest the wants and woes of our brother-mortals should disturb the selfish apathy of our souls!

I am the worst hand in the world at asking a favour. That indirect address, that insinuating implication, which, without any positive request, plainly expresses your wish, is a talent not to be acquired at a plough-tail. Tell me then, for you can, in what periphrasis of lan-

guage, in what circumvolution of phrase, I shall envelope yet not conceal this plain story.—"My dear Mr. Tait, my friend Mr. Duncan, whom I have the pleasure of introducing to you, is a young lad of your own profession, and a gentleman of much modesty and great worth. Perhaps it may be in your power to assist him in the, to him, important consideration of getting a place; but at all events, your notice and acquaintance will be a very great acquisition to him; and I dare pledge myself that he will never disgrace your favour."

You may possibly be surprised, Sir, at such a letter from me; 'tis, I own, in the usual way of calculating these matters, more than our acquaintance entitles me to; but my answer is short: Of all the men at your time of life, whom I knew in Edinburgh, you are the most accessible on the side on which I have assailed you. You are very much altered indeed from what you were when I knew you, if generosity point the path you will not tread, or humanity call to you in vain.

As to myself, a being to whose interest I believe you are still a well-wisher; I am here, breathing at all times, thinking sometimes, and rhyming now and then. Every situation has its share of the cares and pains of life, and my situation I am persuaded has a full ordinary allowance of its pleasures and enjoyments.

My best compliments to your father and Miss Tait. If you have an opportunity, please remember me in the solemn league and covenant of friendship to Mrs. Lewis Hay. I am a wretch for not writing her; but I am so hackneyed with self-accusation in that way, that my conscience lies in my bosom with scarce the sensibility of an oyster in its shell. Where is Lady M'Kenzie? wherever she is, God bless her! I likewise beg leave to trouble you with compliments to Mr. Wm. Hamilton; Mrs. Hamilton and family; and Mrs. Chalmers, when you are in that country. Should you meet with Miss Nimmo, please remember me kindly to her.

No. CLVI.

TO ———.

DEAR SIR,

WHETHER in the way of my trade, I can be of any service to the Rev. Doctor,* is I fear very doubtful. Ajax's shield consisted, I think, of seven bull-hides and a plate of brass, which altogether set Hector's utmost force at defiance. Alas! I am not a Hector, and the worthy Doctor's foes are as securely armed as Ajax was. Ignorance, superstition, bigotry, stupidity, malevolence, self-conceit, envy—all strongly bound in a massy frame of brazen impudence. Good God, Sir! to such a shield, humour is the peck of a sparrow, and satire the pop-gun of a schoolboy. Creation-disgracing *scelerats* such as they, God only can mend, and the devil only can punish. In the comprehending way of Caligula, I wish they had all but one neck. I feel impotent as a child to the ardour of my wishes! O for a withering curse to blast the germins of their wicked machinations. O for a poisonous tornado, winged from the torrid zone of Tartarus, to sweep the spreading crop of their villainous contrivances to the lowest hell!

* Dr. M'Gill of Ayr.

LETTERS, 1791.

No. CLVII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Ellisland, 23d January, 1791.

MANY happy returns of the season to you, my dear friend! As many of the good things of this life, as is consistent with the usual mixture of good and evil in the cup of Being!

I have just finished a poem, which you will receive enclosed. It is my first essay in the way of tales.

I have, these several months, been hammering at an elegy on the amiable and accomplished Miss Burnet. I have got, and can get, no farther than the following fragment, on which, please give me your strictures. In all kinds of poetic composition, I set great store by your opinion; but in sentimental verses, in the poetry of the heart, no Roman Catholic ever set more value on the infallibility of the Holy Father than I do on yours.

I mean the introductory couplets as text verses.

* * * * * * * * *

ELEGY

ON THE LATE MISS BURNET OF MONBODDO.

LIFE ne'er exulted in so rich a prize,
As Burnet, lovely from her native skies;
Nor envious death so triumph'd in a blow,
As that which laid th' accomplish'd Burnet low.

Thy form and mind, sweet maid, can I forget;
In richest ore the brightest jewel set!
In thee, high Heaven above was truest shown,
As by his noblest work the Godhead best is known.

In vain ye flaunt in summer's pride, ye groves;
Thou crystal streamlet with thy flowery shore;
Ye woodland choir that chaunt your idle loves,
Ye cease to charm; Eliza is no more.

Ye heathy wastes inmix'd with reedy fens,
Ye mossy streams, with sedge and rushes stor'd,
Ye rugged cliffs o'erhanging dreary glens,
To you I fly, ye with my soul accord.

Princes whose cumb'rous pride was all their worth,
Shall venal lays their pompous exit hail;
And thou, sweet excellence! forsake our earth,
And not a muse in honest grief bewail.

We saw thee shine in youth and beauty's pride,
And virtue's light that beams beyond the spheres;
But like the sun eclips'd at morning tide,
Thou left'st us darkling in a world of tears.

. . . . . .

Let me hear from you soon. Adieu!

No. CLVIII.

TO MR. PETER HILL.

17th January, 1791.

TAKE these two guineas, and place them over against that ——— account of yours! which has gagged my mouth these five or six months! I can as little write good things as apologies to the man I owe money to. O the supreme curse of making three guineas do the business of five! Not all the labours of Hercules; not all the Hebrews' three centuries of Egyptian bondage were such an insuperable business, such an ——— task!! Poverty! thou half-sister of death, thou cousin-german of hell! where shall I find force of execration equal to the amplitude of thy demerits? Oppressed by thee, the venerable ancient, grown hoary in the practice of every virtue, laden with years and wretchedness, implores a little—little aid to support his existence, from a stony-hearted son of Mammon, whose sun of prosperity never knew a cloud; and is by him denied and insulted. Oppressed by thee, the man of sentiment, whose heart glows with independence, and melts with sensibility, inly pines under the neglect, or writhes in bitterness of soul, under the contumely of arrogant, unfeeling wealth. Oppressed by thee, the son of genius, whose ill-starred ambition plants him at the tables of the fashionable and polite, must see, in suffering silence, his remark neglected, and his person despised, while shallow greatness, in his idiot attempts at wit, shall meet with countenance and applause. Nor is it only the family of worth that have reason to complain of thee; the children of folly and vice, though in common with thee, the offspring of evil, smart equally under thy rod. Owing to thee, the man of unfortunate disposition and neglected education, is condemned as a fool for his dissipation, despised and shunned as a needy wretch, when his follies, as usual, bring him to want: and when his unprincipled necessities drive him to dishonest practices, he is abhorred as a miscreant, and perishes by the justice of his country. But far otherwise is the lot of the man of family and fortune. *His* early follies and extravagance, are spirit and fire; *his* consequent wants, are the embarrassments of an honest fellow; and when, to remedy the matter, he has gained a legal commission to plunder distant provinces, or massacre peaceful nations, he returns, perhaps, laden with the spoils of rapine and murder; lives wicked and respected, and dies a ——— and a lord.—Nay, worst of all, alas for helpless woman! the needy prostitute, who has shivered at the corner of the street, waiting to earn the wages of carnal prostitution, is left neglected and insulted, ridden down by the chariot-wheels of the coroneted RIP, hurrying on to the guilty assignation: she, who, without the same necessities to plead, riots nightly in the same guilty trade.

Well! divines may say of it what they please, but execration is to the mind, what phlebotomy is to the body; the vital sluices of both are wonderfully relieved by their respective evacuations.

No. CLIX.

FROM A. F. TYTLER, ESQ.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 12*th March*, 1791

MR. HILL yesterday put into my hands a sheet of *Grose's Antiquities*, containing a poem of yours, entitled *Tam o' Shanter*, a tale. The very high pleasure I have received from the perusal of this admirable piece, I feel, demands the warmest acknowledgments. Hill tells me he is to send off a packet for you this day; I cannot resist therefore putting on paper what I must have told you in person, had I met with you after the recent perusal of your tale, which is, that I feel I owe you a debt, which, if undischarged, would reproach me with ingratitude. I have seldom in my life tasted of higher enjoyment from any work of genius, than I have received from this composition; and I am much mistaken, if this poem alone, had you never written another syllable, would not have been sufficient to have transmitted your name down to posterity with high reputation. In the introductory part, where you paint the character of your hero, and exhibit him at the ale-house *ingle*, with his tippling cronies, you have delineated nature with a humour and *naiveté*, that would do honour to Matthew Prior; but when you describe the unfortunate orgies of the witches' sabbath, and the hellish scenery in which they are exhibited, you display a power of imagination, that Shakspeare himself could not have exceeded. I know not that I have ever met with a picture of more horrible fancy than the following:

" Coffins stood round like open presses,
That showed the dead in their last dresses:

And by some devilish cantrip slight,
Each in his cauld hand held a light."

But when I came to the succeeding lines, my blood ran cold within me:

" A knife a father's throat had mangled,
Whom his ain son of life bereft:
The grey hairs yet stuck to the heft."

And here, after the two following lines, " Wi' mair o' horrible and awfu'," &c. the descriptive part might perhaps have been better closed, than the four lines which succeed, which, though good in themselves, yet as they derive all their merit from the satire they contain, are here rather misplaced among the circumstances of pure horror.* The initiation of the young witch is most happily described—the effect of her charms, exhibited in the dance, on Satan himself—the apostrophe—" Ah, little thought thy reverend grannie!"—the transport of Tam, who forgets his situation, and enters completely into the spirit of the scene, are all features of high merit, in this excellent composition. The only fault it possesses, is, that the winding up, or conclusion of the story, is not commensurate to the interest which is excited by the descriptive and characteristic painting of the preceding parts.—The preparation is fine, but the result is not adequate. But for this, perhaps, you have a good apology—you stick to the popular tale.

And now that I have got out my mind, and feel a little relieved of the weight of that debt I owed you, let me end this desultory scroll by an advice:—You have proved your talent for a species of composition, in which but a very few of our own poets have succeeded—Go on—write more tales in the same style; you will eclipse Prior and La Fontaine; for, with equal wit, equal power of numbers, and equal *naiveté* of expression, you have a bolder, and more vigorous imagination.

I am, dear Sir, with much esteem,
Yours, &c.

No. CLX.

TO THE SAME.

SIR,

NOTHING less than the unfortunate accident I have met with, could have prevented my grateful acknowledgments for your letter. His own favourite poem, and that an essay in a walk of the muses entirely new to him, where consequently his hopes and fears were in the most anxious alarm for his success in the attempt; to have that poem so much applauded by one of the first judges, was the most delicious vibration that ever trilled along the heart-strings of a poor poet. However, providence, to keep up the proper proportion of evil with the good, which, it seems is necessary in this sublunary state, thought proper to check my exultation by a very serious misfortune. A day or two after I received your letter, my horse came down with me and broke my right arm. As this is the first service my arm has done me since its disaster, I find myself unable to do more than just in general terms to thank you for this additional instance of your patronage and friendship. As to the faults you detected in the piece, they are truly there: one of them, the hit at the lawyer and priest, I shall cut out; as to the falling off in the catastrophe, for the reason you justly adduce, it cannot easily be remedied. Your approbation, Sir, has given me such additional spirits to persevere in this species of poetic composition, that I am already revolving two or three stories in my fancy. If I can bring these floating ideas to bear any kind of embodied form, it will give me an additional opportunity of assuring you how much I have the honour to be, &c.

* Our bard profited by Mr. Tytler's criticism, and expunged the four lines accordingly.

No. CLXI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 7th February, 1791.

WHEN I tell you, Madam, that by a fall, not from my horse, but with my horse, I have been a cripple some time, and that this is the first day my arm and hand have been able to serve me in writing; you will allow that it is too good an apology for my seemingly ungrateful silence. I am now getting better, and am able to rhyme a little, which implies some tolerable ease; as I cannot think that the most poetic genius is able to compose on the rack.

I do not remember if ever I mentioned to you my having an idea of composing an elegy on the late Miss Burnet of Monboddo. I had the honour of being pretty well acquainted with her, and have seldom felt so much at the loss of an acquaintance, as when I heard that so amiable and accomplished a piece of God's works was no more. I have as yet gone no farther than the following fragment, of which please let me have your opinion. You know that elegy is a subject so much exhausted, that any new idea on the business is not to be expected; 'tis well if we can place an old idea in a new light. How far I have succeeded as to this last, you will judge from what follows:—(*See p.* 347, *then this additional verse*),

The parent's heart that nestled fond in thee,
That heart how sunk, a prey to grief and care!
So deckt the woodbine sweet yon aged tree,
So from it ravaged, leaves it bleak and bare.
. . . . . .

I have proceeded no further.

Your kind letter, with your kind *remembrance* of your god-son, came safe. This last, Madam, is scarcely what my pride can bear. As to the little fellow, he is, partiality apart, the finest boy I have of a long time seen. He is now seventeen months old, has the small-pox and measles over, has cut several teeth, and yet never had a grain of doctor's drugs in his bowels.

I am truly happy to hear that the "little floweret" is blooming so fresh and fair, and that the "mother plant" is rather recovering her drooping head. Soon and well may her "cruel wounds" be healed! I have written thus far with a good deal of difficulty. When I get a little abler you shall hear farther from,

Madam, yours, &c.

No. CLXII.

TO LADY W. M. CONSTABLE,

ACKNOWLEDGING A PRESENT OF A VALUABLE SNUFF-BOX, WITH A FINE PICTURE OF MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, ON THE LID.

MY LADY,

NOTHING less than the unlucky accident of having lately broken my right arm, could have prevented me, the moment I received your ladyship's elegant present by Mrs. Miller, from returning you my warmest and most grateful acknowledgments. I assure your ladyship, I shall set it apart; the symbols of religion shall only be more sacred. In the moment of poetic composition, the box shall be my inspiring genius. When I would breathe the comprehensive wish of benevolence for the happiness of others, I shall recollect your ladyship; when I would interest my fancy in the distresses incident to humanity, I shall remember the unfortunate Mary.

No. CLXIII.

TO MRS. GRAHAM, OF FINTRY.

MADAM,

WHETHER it is that the story of our Mary, Queen of Scots, has a peculiar effect on the feelings of a poet, or whether I have, in the enclosed ballad, succeeded beyond my usual poetic success, I know not: but it has pleased me beyond any effort of my muse for a good while past; on that account I enclose it particularly to you. It is true, the purity of my motives may be suspected. I am already deeply indebted to Mr. G———'s goodness; and, what *in the usual ways of men*, is of infinitely greater importance, Mr. G. can do me service of the utmost importance in time to come. I was born a poor dog; and however I may occasionally pick a better bone than I used to do, I know I must live and die poor; but I will indulge the flattering faith that my poetry will considerably outlive my poverty; and without any fustain affectation of spirit, I can promise and affirm, that it must be no ordinary craving of the latter shall ever make me do any thing injurious to the honest fame of the former. Whatever may be my failings, for failings are a part of human nature, may they ever be those of a generous heart, and an independent mind. It is no fault of mine that I was born to dependence; nor is it Mr. G———'s chiefest praise that he can command influence; but it his merit to bestow, not only with the kindness of a brother, but with the politeness of a gentleman; and I trust it shall be mine, to receive with thankfulness and remember with undiminished gratitude.

No. CLXIV.

FROM THE REV. (NOW PRINCIPAL) BAIRD.

SIR, *London, 8th February*, 1791.

I TROUBLE you with this letter, to inform you that I am in hopes of being able very soon to bring to the press a new edition (long since talked of) of *Michael Bruce's Poems*. The profits of the edition are to go to his mother—a woman of eighty years of age—poor and helpless. The poems are to be published by subscription; and it may be possible, I think, to make out a 2s. 6d. or 3s. volume, with the assistance of a few hitherto unpublished verses, which I have got from the mother of the poet.

But the design I have in view in writing to you, is not merely to inform you of these facts, it is to solicit the aid of your name and pen in support of the scheme. The reputation of Bruce is already high with every reader of classical taste, and I shall be anxious to guard against tarnishing his character, by allowing any new poems to appear that may lower it. For this purpose, the MSS. I am in possession of, have been submitted to the revision of some whose critical talents I can trust to, and I mean still to submit them to others.

May I beg to know, therefore, if you will take the trouble of perusing the MSS.—of giving your opinion, and suggesting what curtailments, alterations, or amendments, occur to you as advisable? And will you allow us to let it be known, that a few lines by you will be added to the volume?

I know the extent of this request.—It is bold to make it. But I have this consolation, that though you see it proper to refuse it, you

will not blame me for having made it; you will see my apology in the *motive*.

May I just add, that Michael Bruce is one in whose company, from his past appearance, you would not, I am convinced, blush to be found; and as I would submit every line of his that should now be published, to your own criticisms, you would be assured that nothing derogatory either to him or you, would be admitted in that appearance he may make in future.

You have already paid an honourable tribute to kindred genius in Fergusson—I fondly hope that the mother of Bruce will experience your patronage.

I wish to have the subscription papers circulated by the 14th of March, Bruce's birth-day; which, I understand, some friends in Scotland talk this year of observing—at that time it will be resolved, I imagine, to place a plain, humble stone over his grave. This, at least, I trust you will agree to do—to furnish, in a few couplets, an *inscription* for it.

On those points may I solicit an answer as early as possible; a short delay might disappoint us in procuring that relief to the mother, which is the object of the whole.

You will be pleased to address for me under cover to the Duke of Athole, London.

. . . . . .

P. S.—Have you ever seen an engraving published here some time ago from one of your poems, "*O thou Pale Orb.*" If you have not, I shall have the pleasure of sending it to you.

No. CLXV.

TO THE REV. G. BAIRD,

IN ANSWER TO THE FOREGOING.

Why did you, my dear Sir, write to me in such a hesitating style, on the business of poor Bruce? Don't I know, and have I not felt, the many ills, the peculiar ills that poetic flesh is heir to? You shall have your choice of all the unpublished poems I have; and had your letter had my direction so as to have reached me sooner (it only came to my hand this moment), I should have directly put you out of suspense on the subject. I only ask, that some prefatory advertisement in the book, as well as the subscription bills, may bear, that the publication is solely for the benefit of Bruce's mother. I would not put it in the power of ignorance to surmise, or malice to insinuate, that I clubbed a share in the work from mercenary motives. Nor need you give me credit for any remarkable generosity in my part of the business. I have such a host of peccadilloes, failings, follies, and backslidings (any body but myself might perhaps give some of them a worse appellation), that by way of some balance, however trifling, in the account, I am fain to do any good that occurs in my very limited power to a fellow-creature, just for the selfish purpose of clearing a little the vista of retrospection.

. . . . . .

No. CLXVI.

TO THE REV. ARCH. ALISON.

Ellisland, near Dumfries, 14th Feb. 1791.

SIR,

You must, by this time, have set me down as one of the most ungrateful of men. You did me the honour to present me with a book which does honour to science and the intellectual powers of man, and I have not even so much as acknowledged the receipt of it. The fact is, you yourself are to blame for it. Flattered as I was by your telling me that you wished to have my opinion of the work, the old spiritual enemy of mankind, who knows well that vanity is one of the sins that most easily beset me, put it into my head to ponder over the performance with the look-out of a critic, and to draw up forsooth a deep learned digest of strictures on a composition, of which, in fact, until I read the book, I did not even know the first principles. I own, Sir, that at first glance, several of your propositions startled me as paradoxical. That the martial clangor of a trumpet had something in it vastly more grand, heroic, and sublime, than the twingle twangle of a Jews' harp; that the delicate flexure of a rose-twig, when the half-blown flower is heavy with the tears of the dawn, was infinitely more beautiful and elegant than the upright stub of a burdock; and that from something innate and independent of all association of ideas;—these I had set down as irrefragible, orthodox truths, until perusing your book shook my faith.—In short, Sir, except *Euclid's Elements of Geometry*, which I made a shift to unravel by my father's fire-side, in the winter evening of the first season I held the plough, I never read a book which gave me such a quantum of information, and added so much to my stock of ideas as your "*Essays on the Principles of Taste.*" One thing, Sir, you must forgive my mentioning as an uncommon merit in the work, I mean the language. To clothe abstract philosophy in elegance of style, sounds something like a contradiction in terms; but you have convinced me that they are quite compatible.

I enclose you some poetic bagatelles of my late composition. The one in print is my first essay in the way of telling a tale.

I am, Sir, &c.

No. CLXVII.

TO DR. MOORE.

Ellisland, 28th February, 1791.

I DO not know, Sir, whether you are a subscriber to *Grose's Antiquities of Scotland*. If you are, the enclosed poem will not be altogether new to you. Captain Grose did me the favour to send me a dozen copies of the proof-sheet, of which this is one. Should you have read the piece before, still this will answer the principal end I have in view: it will give me another opportunity of thanking you for all your goodness to the rustic bard; and also of showing you, that the abilities you have been pleased to commend and patronize are still employed in the way you wish.

The *Elegy on Captain Henderson*, is a tribute to the memory of a man I loved much. Poets have in this the same advantage as Roman Catholics; they can be of service to their friends after they have past that bourne where all other kindness ceases to be of any avail. Whether, after all, either the one or the other be of any real service to the dead, is, I fear, very problematical; but I am sure they are highly gratifying to the living: and as a very orthodox text, I forget where in Scripture, says, "whatsoever is not of faith, is sin;" so say I, whatsoever is not detrimental to society, and is of positive enjoyment, is of God, the giver of all good things, and ought to be received and enjoyed by his creatures with thankful delight. As almost all my religious tenets originate from my heart, I am wonderfully pleased with the idea, that I can still keep up a tender intercourse with the dearly beloved friend, or still more dearly beloved mistress, who is gone to the world of spirits.

The ballad on Queen Mary was begun while I was busy with *Percy's Reliques of English Poetry*. By the way, how much is every honest heart, which has a tincture of Caledonian prejudice, obliged to you for your glorious story of Buchanan and Targe. 'Twas an unequivocal proof of your loyal gallantry of soul, giving Targe the victory. I should have been mortified to the ground if you had not.

. . . . . .

I have just read over, once more of many times, your *Zeluco*. I marked with my pencil, as I went along, every passage that pleased me particularly above the rest; and one, or two, I think, which, with humble deference, I am disposed to think unequal to the merits of the book. I have sometimes thought to transcribe these marked passages, or at least so much of them as to point where they are, and send them to you. Original strokes that strongly depict the human heart, is your and Fielding's province, beyond any other novelist I have ever perused. Richardson indeed might perhaps be excepted; but, unhappily, his *dramatis personæ* are beings of some other world; and however they may captivate the unexperienced, romantic fancy of a boy or a girl, they will ever, in proportion as we have made human nature our study, dissatisfy our riper minds.

As to my private concerns, I am going on, a mighty tax-gatherer before the Lord, and have lately had the interest to get myself ranked on the list of excise as a supervisor. I am not yet employed as such, but in a few years I shall fall into the file of supervisorship by seniority. I have had an immense loss in the death of the Earl of Glencairn; the patron from whom all my fame and good fortune took its rise. Independent of my grateful attachment to him, which was indeed so strong that it pervaded my very soul, and was entwined with the thread of my existence; so soon as the prince's friends had got in (and every dog, you know, has his day), my getting forward in the excise would have been an easier business than otherwise it will be. Though this was a consummation devoutly to be wished, yet, thank Heaven, I can live and rhyme as I am; and as to my boys, poor little fellows! if I cannot place them on as high an elevation in life as I could wish, I shall, if I am favoured so much of the Disposer of events as to see that period, fix them on as broad and independent a basis as possible. Among the many wise adages which have been treasured up by our Scottish ancestors, this is one of the best, *Better be the head of the commonalty, as the tail o' the gentry.*

But I am got on a subject, which, however interesting to me, is of no manner of consequence to you; so I shall give you a short poem on the other page, and close this with assuring you how sincerely I have the honour to be, yours, &c.

(*Beauteous Rose-Bud, p. 56.*)

. . . . . .

No. CLXVIII.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

12th March, 1791.

IF the foregoing piece be worth your strictures, let me have them. For my own part, a thing that I have just composed, always appears through a double portion of that partial medium in which an author will ever view his own works. I believe, in general, novelty has something in it that inebriates the fancy, and not unfrequently dissipates and fumes away like other intoxication, and leaves the poor patient, as usual, with an aching heart. A striking instance of this might be adduced, in the revolution of many a hymeneal honeymoon. But

lest I sink into stupid prose, and so sacrilegiously intrude on the office of my parish priest, I shall fill up the page in my own way, and give you another song of my late composition, which will appear, perhaps, in Johnson's work, as well as the former.

You must know a beautiful Jacobite air, *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame.* When political combustion ceases to be the object of princes and patriots, it then, you know, becomes the lawful prey of historians and poets.

(*See Songs, p.* 236).

. . . . . .

If you like the air, and if the stanzas hit your fancy, you cannot imagine, my dear friend, how much you would oblige me, if, by the charms of your delightful voice, you would give my honest effusion to "the memory of joys that are past," to the few friends whom you indulge in that pleasure. But I have scribbled on 'till I hear the clock has intimated the near approach of

"That hour o' night's black arch the key-stane."—

So good night to you! Sound be your sleep, and delectable your dreams! Apropos, how do you like this thought in a ballad, I have just now on the tapis?

I look to the west, when I gae to rest,
That happy my dreams and my slumbers may be:
For far in the west is he I lo'e best—
The lad that is dear to my baby and me!

. . . . . .

Good night, once more, and God bless you!

No. CXLIX.

TO MR. ALEXANDER DALZIEL,*

FACTOR, FINDLAYSTON.

Ellisland, March 19, 1791.

MY DEAR SIR,

I HAVE taken the liberty to frank this letter to you, as it encloses an idle poem of mine, which I send you; and God knows you may perhaps pay dear enough for it if you read it through. Not that this is my own opinion; but an author, by the time he has composed and corrected his work, has quite pored away all his powers of critical discrimination.

I can easily guess from my own heart, what you have felt on a late most melancholy event. God knows what I have suffered, at the loss of my best friend, my first, my dearest patron and benefactor; the man to whom I owe all that I am and have! I am gone into mourning for him, and with more sincerity of grief than I fear some will, who by nature's ties ought to feel on the occasion.

I will be exceedingly obliged to you indeed, to let me know the news of the noble family, how the poor mother and the two sisters support their loss. I had a packet of poetic bagatelles ready to send to Lady Betty, when I saw the fatal tidings in the newspaper. I see by the same channel that the honoured REMAINS of my noble patron, are designed to be brought to the family burial place. Dare I trouble you to let me know privately before the day of interment, that I may cross the country, and steal among the crowd, to pay a tear to the last sight of my ever revered benefactor? It will oblige me beyond expression.

No. CL.

FROM DR. MOORE.

DEAR SIR, *London, 29th March*, 1791.

YOUR letter of the 28th of February I received only two days ago, and this day I had the pleasure of waiting on the Rev. Mr. Baird, at the Duke of Athole's, who had been so obliging as to transmit it to me, with the printed verses on *Alloway Church*, the *Elegy on Captain Henderson*, and the *Epitaph*. There are many poetical beauties in the former: what I particularly admire are the three striking similes from

"Or like the snow falls in the river,"

and the eight lines which begin with

"By this time he was cross the ford;"

so exquisitely expressive of the superstitious impressions of the country. And the twenty-two lines from

"Coffins stood round like open presses,"

* This gentleman, the factor, or steward, of Burns's noble friend, Lord Glencairn, with a view to encourage a second edition of the poems, laid the volume before his lordship, with such an account of the rustic bard's situation and prospects as from his slender acquaintance with him he could furnish. The result, as communicated to Burns by Mr. Dalziel, is highly creditable to the character of Lord Glencairn. After reading the book, his lordship declared that its merits greatly exceeded his expectation, and he took it with him as a *literary curiosity* to Edinburgh. He repeated his wishes to be of service to Burns, and desired Mr. Dalziel to inform him, that in patronizing the book, ushering it with effect into the world, or treating with the booksellers, he would most willingly give every aid in his power; adding his request that Burns would take the earliest opportunity of letting him know in what way or manner he could best further his interests. He also expressed a wish to see some of the unpublished manuscripts, with a view to establishing his character with the world.—CROMEK.

which, in my opinion, are equal to the ingredients of Shakspeare's cauldron in *Macbeth*.

As for the *Elegy*, the chief merit of it consists in the very graphical description of the objects belonging to the country in which the poet writes, and which none but a Scottish poet could have described, and none but a real poet, and a close observer of Nature, could have *so* described.

. . . . . .

There is something original, and to me wonderfully pleasing, in the *Epitaph*.

I remember you once hinted before, what you repeat in your last, that you had made some remarks on *Zeluco*, on the margin. I should be very glad to see them, and regret you did not send them before the last edition, which is just published. Pray transcribe them for me, I sincerely value your opinion very highly, and pray do not suppress one of those in which you *censure* the sentiment or expression. Trust me it will break no squares between us—I am not akin to the Bishop of Grenada.

I must now mention what has been on my mind for some time: I cannot help thinking you imprudent in scattering abroad so many copies of your verses. It is most natural to give a few to confidential friends, particularly to those who are connected with the subject, or who are perhaps themselves the subject, but this ought to be done under promise not to give other copies. Of the poem you sent me on Queen Mary, I refused every solicitation for copies, but I lately saw it in a newspaper. My motive for cautioning you on this subject is, that I wish to engage you to collect all your fugitive pieces, not already printed, and after they have been re-considered, and polished to the utmost of your power, I would have you publish them by another subscription; in promoting of which I will exert myself with pleasure.

In your future compositions, I wish you would use the modern English. You have shown your powers in Scottish sufficiently. Although in certain subjects it gives additional zest to the humour, yet it is lost to the English; and why should you write only for a part of the island, when you can command the admiration of the whole.

If you chance to write to my friend Mrs. Dunlop of Dunlop, I beg to be affectionately remembered to her. She must not judge of the warmth of my sentiments respecting her, by the number of my letters; I hardly ever write a line but on business: and I do not know that I should have scribbled all this to you, but for the business part, that is, to instigate you to a new publication; and to tell you that when you think you have a sufficient number to make a volume, you should set your friends on getting subscriptions. I wish I could have a few hours conversation with you—I have many things to say which I cannot write. If I ever go to Scotland, I will let you know, that you may meet me at your own house, or my friend Mrs. Hamilton's, or both.

Adieu, my dear Sir, &c.

No. CLI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Ellisland, 11th April, 1791.

I AM once more able, my honoured friend, to return you, with my own hand, thanks for the many instances of your friendship, and particularly for your kind anxiety in this last disaster that my evil genius had in store for me. However, life is chequered—joy and sorrow—for on Saturday morning last, Mrs. Burns made me a present of a fine boy; rather stouter but not so handsome as your god-son was at his time of life. Indeed I look on your little namesake to be my *chef d'œuvre* in that species of manufacture, as I look on *Tam o' Shanter* to be my standard performance in the poetical line. 'Tis true, both the one and the other discover a spice of roguish waggery, that might, perhaps, be as well spared; but then they also show, in my opinion, a force of genius, and a finishing polish, that I despair of ever excelling. Mrs. Burns is getting stout again, and laid as lustily about her to-day at breakfast, as a reaper from the corn-ridge. That is the peculiar privilege and blessing of our hale, sprightly damsels, that are bred among the *hay and heather*. We cannot hope for that highly polished mind, that charming delicacy of soul, which is found among the female world in the more elevated stations of life, and which is certainly by far the most bewitching charm in the famous cestus of Venus. It is indeed such an inestimable treasure, that where it can be had in its native heavenly purity, unstained by some one or other of the many shades of affectation, and unalloyed by some one or other of the many species of caprice, I declare to Heaven, I should think it cheaply purchased at the expense of every other earthly good! But as this angelic creature is, I am afraid, extremely rare in any station and rank of life, and totally denied to such an humble one as mine; we meaner mortals must put up with the next rank of female excellence—as fine a figure and face we can produce as any rank of life whatever; rustic, native grace; unaffected modesty, and unsullied purity; nature's mother-wit, and the rudiments of taste; a simplicity of soul, unsuspicious of, because unacquainted with, the crooked ways of a selfish, interested, disingenuous world;—and the dearest charm of all the rest, a yielding sweetness of disposition, and a generous warmth of heart, grateful for love on our part, and ardently glowing with a more than equal return; these, with a healthy frame, a sound vigorous consti-

tution, which your high ranks can scarcely ever hope to enjoy, are the charms of lovely woman in my humble walk of life.

This is the greatest effort my broken arm has yet made. Do, let me hear by first post, how *cher petit Monsieur* comes on with his small-pox. May Almighty Goodness preserve and restore him!

No. CLII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

11th June, 1791.

Let me interest you, my dear Cunningham, in behalf of the gentleman, who waits on you with this. He is a Mr. Clarke, of Moffat, principal schoolmaster there, and is at present suffering severely under the . . . . . of one or two powerful individuals of his employers. He is accused of harshness to . . . . . that were placed under his care. God help the teacher, if a man of sensibility and genius, and such is my friend Clarke, when a booby father presents him with his booby son, and insists on lighting up the rays of science, in a fellow's head whose skull is impervious and inaccessible by any other way than a positive fracture with a cudgel; a fellow whom, in fact, it savours of impiety to attempt making a scholar of, as he has been marked a blockhead in the book of fate, at the almighty fiat of his Creator.

The patrons of Moffat school are, the ministers, magistrates, and town-council of Edinburgh, and as the business comes now before them, let me beg my dearest friend to do every thing in his power to serve the interests of a man of genius and worth, and a man whom I particularly respect and esteem. You know some good fellows among the magistracy and council, ... but particularly, you have much to say with a reverend gentleman to whom you have the honour of being very nearly related, and whom his country and age have had the honour to produce. I need not name the historian of Charles V.* I tell him, through the medium of his nephew's influence, that Mr. Clarke is a gentleman who will not disgrace even his patronage. I know the merits of the cause thoroughly, and say it, that my friend is falling a sacrifice to prejudiced ignorance, and . . . . . God help the children of dependence! Hated and persecuted by their enemies, and too often, alas! almost unexceptionably, received by their friends with disrespect and reproach, under the thin disguise of cold civility and humiliating advice. O to be a sturdy savage, stalking in the pride of his independence, amid the solitary wilds of his deserts, rather than in civilized life, helplessly to tremble for a subsistence, precarious as the caprice of a fellow-creature! Every man has his virtues, and no man is without his failings; and curse on that privileged plain-dealing of friendship, which in the hour of my calamity, cannot reach forth the helping hand without at the same time pointing out those failings, and apportioning them their share in procuring my present distress. My friends, for such the world calls ye, and such ye think yourselves to be, pass by virtues if you please, but do, also, spare my follies: the first will witness in my breast for themselves, and the last will give pain enough to the ingenuous mind without you. And since deviating more or less from the paths of propriety and rectitude, must be incident to human nature, do thou, fortune, put it in my power, always from myself, and of myself, to bear the consequences of those errors. I do not want to be independent that I may sin, but I want to be independent in my sinning.

To return in this rambling letter to the subject I set out with, let me recommend my friend, Mr. Clarke, to your acquaintance and good offices; his worth entitles him to the one, and his gratitude will merit the other. I long much to hear from you. Adieu.

* Dr. Robertson was uncle to Mr. Cunningham.

No. CLIII.

FROM THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Dryburgh Abbey, 17th June, 1791.

Lord Buchan has the pleasure to invite Mr. Burns to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson, on Ednam Hill, on the 22d of September; for which day perhaps his muse may inspire an ode suited to the occasion. Suppose Mr. Burns should, leaving the Nith, go across the country, and meet the Tweed at the nearest point from his farm—and, wandering along the pastoral banks of Thomson's pure parent stream, catch inspiration on the devious walk, till he finds Lord Buchan sitting on the ruins of Dryburgh. There the commendator will give him a hearty welcome, and try to light his lamp at the pure flame of native genius, upon the altar of Caledonian virtue. This poetical perambulation of the Tweed, is a thought of the late Sir Gilbert Elliot's and of Lord Minto's, followed out by his accomplished grandson, the present Sir Gilbert, who, having been with Lord Buchan lately, the project was renewed, and will, they hope, be executed in the manner proposed.

No. CLIV.

TO THE SAME.

MY LORD,

LANGUAGE sinks under the ardour of my feelings, when I would thank your lordship for the honour you have done me in inviting me to make one at the coronation of the bust of Thomson. In my first enthusiasm in reading the card you did me the honour to write me, I overlooked every obstacle, and determined to go; but I fear it will not be in my power. A week or two's absence, in the very middle of my harvest, is what I much doubt I dare not venture on.

Your lordship hints at an ode for the occasion: but who would write after Collins? I read over his verses to the memory of Thomson, and despaired.—I got indeed to the length of three or four stanzas, in the way of address to the shade of the bard, on crowning his bust. I shall trouble your lordship, with the subjoined copy of them, which, I am afraid, will be but too convincing a proof how unequal I am to the task. However, it affords me an opportunity of approaching your lordship, and declaring how sincerely and gratefully I have the honour to be, &c.

(*See p.* 55.)

. . . . . .

No. CLV.

TO MR. THOMAS SLOAN,

CARE OF WM. KENNEDY, ESQ. MANCHESTER.

Ellisland, Sept. 1, 1791.

MY DEAR SLOAN,

SUSPENSE is worse than disappointment, for that reason I hurry to tell you that I just now learn that Mr. Ballantine does not choose to interfere more in the business. I am truly sorry for it, but cannot help it.

You blame me for not writing you sooner, but you will please to recollect that you omitted one little necessary piece of information;—your address.

However you know equally well, my hurried life, indolent temper, and strength of attachment. It must be a longer period than the longest life "in the world's hale and undegenerate days," that will make me forget so dear a friend as Mr. Sloan. I am prodigal enough at times, but I will not part with such a treasure as that.

I can easily enter into the *embarras* of your present situation. You know my favourite quotation from Young—

———"On Reason build RESOLVE!
That column of true majesty in man."—

And that other favourite one from Thomson's Alfred—

"What proves the hero truely GREAT,
Is, never, never to despair."

Or, shall I quote you an author of your acquaintance?

"—Whether DOING, SUFFERING, or FORBEARING,
You may do miracles by—PERSEVERING."

I have nothing new to tell you. The few friends we have are going on in the old way. I sold my crop on this day se'night, and sold it very well. A guinea an acre, on an average, above value. But such a scene of drunkenness was hardly ever seen in this country. After the roup was over, about thirty people engaged in a battle, every man for his own hand, and fought it out for three hours. Nor was the scene much better in the house. No fighting, indeed, but folks lying drunk on the floor, and decanting, until both my dogs got so drunk by attending them, that they could not stand. You will easily guess how I enjoyed the scene; as I was no farther over than you used to see me.

Mrs. B. and family have been in Ayrshire these many weeks.

Farewell! and God bless you, my dear Friend!

No. CLVI.

FROM THE EARL OF BUCHAN.

Dryburgh Abbey, 18th September, 1791.

SIR,

YOUR address to the shade of Thomson has been well received by the public; and though I should disapprove of your allowing Pegasus to ride with you off the field of your honourable and useful profession, yet I cannot resist an impulse which I feel at this moment to suggest to your muse, *Harvest Home*, as an excellent subject for her grateful song, in which the peculiar aspect and manners of our country might furnish an excellent portrait and landscape of Scotland, for the employment of happy moments of leisure and recess, from your more important occupations.

Your *Halloween*, and *Saturday Night*, will remain to distant posterity as interesting pictures of rural innocence and happiness in your native country, and were happily written in the dialect of the people; but *Harvest Home* being suited to descriptive poetry, except where colloquial, may escape disguise of a dialect which admits of no elegance or dignity of expression. Without the assistance of any god or goddess, and without the invocation of any foreign muse, you may convey in epistolary form the descrip-

tion of a scene so gladdening and picturesque, with all the concomitant local position, landscape and costume; contrasting the peace, improvement, and happiness of the borders of the once hostile nations of Britain, with their former oppression and misery, and showing, in lively and beautiful colours, the beauties and joys of a rural life. And as the unvitiated heart is naturally disposed to overflow in gratitude in the moment of prosperity, such a subject would furnish you with an amiable opportunity of perpetuating the names of Glencairn, Miller, and your other eminent benefactors; which from what I know of your spirit, and have seen of your poems and letters, will not deviate from the chastity of praise, that is so uniformly united to true taste and genius.

I am, Sir, &c.

No. CLVII.

TO LADY E. CUNNINGHAM

MY LADY,

I WOULD, as usual, have availed myself of the privilege your goodness has allowed me, of sending you any thing I compose in my poetical way; but as I had resolved, so soon as the shock of my irreparable loss would allow me, to pay a tribute to my late benefactor, I determined to make that the first piece I should do myself the honour of sending you. Had the wing of my fancy been equal to the ardour of my heart, the enclosed had been much more worthy your perusal; as it is, I beg leave to lay it at your ladyship's feet. As all the world knows my obligations to the late Earl of Glencairn, I would wish to show as openly that my heart glows, and shall ever glow, with the most grateful sense and remembrance of his lordship's goodness. The sables I did myself the honour to wear to his lordship's memory, were not the "mockery of woe." Nor shall my gratitude perish with me:—If, among my children, I shall have a son that has a heart, he shall hand it down to his child as a family honour, and a family debt, that my dearest existence I owe to the noble house of Glencairn!

I was about to say, my lady, that if you think the poem may venture to see the light, I would, in some way or other, give it to the world.*

. . . . . .

* The poem enclosed, is The *Lament for James, Earl of Glencairn.*

No. CLVIII.

TO MR. AINSLIE.

MY DEAR AINSLIE,

CAN you minister to a mind diseased? Can you, amid the horrors of penitence, regret, remorse, head-ache, nausea, and all the rest of the d—d hounds of hell, that beset a poor wretch, who has been guilty of the sin of drunkenness—can you speak peace to a troubled soul?

Miserable perdu that I am, I have tried every thing that used to amuse me, but in vain: here must I sit a monument of the vengeance laid up in store for the wicked, slowly counting every chick of the clock as it slowly—slowly numbers over these lazy scoundrels of hours, who, d—n them, are ranked up before me, every one at his neighbour's backside, and every one with a burthen of anguish on his back, to pour on my devoted head—and there is none to pity me. My wife scolds me! my business torments me, and my sins come staring me in the face, every one telling a more bitter tale than his fellow.—When I tell you even . . . . has lost its power to please, you will guess something of my hell within, and all around me—I began *Elibanks* and *Elibraes*, but the stanza fell unenjoyed, and unfinished from my listless tongue; at last I luckily thought of reading over an old letter of yours, that lay by me in my book-case, and I felt something for the first time since I opened my eyes, of pleasurable existence.—Well—I begin to breathe a little, since I began to write you. How are you, and what are you doing? How goes law? Apropos, for connection's sake do not address to me supervisor, for that is an honour I cannot pretend to—I am on the list, as we call it, for a supervisor, and will be called out by and bye to act one; but at present, I am a simple gauger, tho' t'other day I got an appointment to an excise division of L.25 *per ann.* better than the rest. My present income, down money, is L.70 *per ann.*

. . . . . .

I have one or two good fellows here whom you would be glad to know.

. . . . . .

No. CLIX.

FROM SIR JOHN WHITEFOORD.

SIR, *Near Maybole, 16th Oct.* 1791

ACCEPT of my thanks for your favour with the *Lament* on the death of my much esteemed friend, and your worthy patron, the perusal of which pleased and affected me much. The lines addressed to me are very flattering.

I have always thought it most natural to suppose, (and a strong argument in favour of a fu

ture existence) that when we see an honourable and virtuous man labouring under bodily infirmities, and oppressed by the frowns of fortune in this world, that there was a happier state beyond the grave; where that worth and honour which were neglected here, would meet with their just reward, and where temporal misfortunes would receive an eternal recompense. Let us cherish this hope for our departed friend; and moderate our grief for that loss we have sustained; knowing that he cannot return to us, but we may go to him.

Remember me to your wife, and with every good wish for the prosperity of you and your family, believe me at all times,

Your most sincere friend,
JOHN WHITEFOORD.

No. CLX.

FROM A. F. TYTLER, Esq.

Edinburgh, 27th Nov. 1791.

You have much reason to blame me for neglecting till now to acknowledge the receipt of a most agreeable packet, containing *The Whistle*, a ballad; and *The Lament;* which reached me about six weeks ago in London, from whence I am just returned. Your letter was forwarded to me there from Edinburgh, where, as I observed by the date, it had lain for some days. This was an additional reason for me to have answered it immediately on receiving it; but the truth was, the bustle of business, engagements and confusion of one kind or another, in which I found myself immersed all the time I was in London, absolutely put it out of my power. But to have done with apologies, let me now endeavour to prove myself in some degree deserving of the very flattering compliment you pay me, by giving you at least a frank and candid, if it should not be a judicious criticism on the poems you sent me.

The ballad of *The Whistle* is, in my opinion, truly excellent. The old tradition which you have taken up is the best adapted for a Bacchanalian composition of any I have ever met with, and you have done it full justice. In the first place, the strokes of wit arise naturally from the subject, and are uncommonly happy. For example,—

"The bands grew the tighter the more they were wet."

"Cynthia hinted she'd find them next morn."

"Though Fate said a hero should perish in light,
So up rose bright Phœbus and down fell the knight."

In the next place, you are singularly happy in the discrimination of your heroes, and in giving each the sentiments and language suitable to his character. And, lastly, you have much merit in the delicacy of the panegyric which you have contrived to throw on each of the *dramatis personæ*, perfectly appropriate to his character. The compliment to Sir Robert, the blunt soldier, is peculiarly fine. In short, this composition, in my opinion, does you great honour, and I see not a line or a word in it which I could wish to be altered.

As to *The Lament*, I suspect, from some expressions in your letter to me, that you are more doubtful with respect to the merits of this piece than of the other, and I own I think you have reason; for although it contains some beautiful stanzas, as the first, "The wind blew hollow," &c. the fifth, "Ye scatter'd birds;" the thirteenth, "Awake thy last sad voice," &c. Yet it appears to me faulty as a whole, and inferior to several of those you have already published in the same strain. My principal objection lies against the plan of the piece. I think it was unnecessary and improper to put the lamentation in the mouth of a fictitious character, an *aged bard*.—It had been much better to have lamented your patron in your own person, to have expressed your genuine feelings for his loss, and to have spoken the language of nature rather than that of fiction on the subject. Compare this with your poem of the same title in your printed volume, which begins, *O thou pale Orb!* and observe what it is that forms the charm of that composition. It is, that it speaks the language of *truth* and of *nature*. The change is, in my opinion, injudicious too in this respect, that an *aged* bard has much less need of a patron and protector than a *young* one. I have thus given you, with much freedom, my opinion of both the pieces. I should have made a very ill return to the compliment you paid me, if I had given you any other than my genuine sentiments.

It will give me great pleasure to hear from you when you find leisure, and I beg you will believe me ever, dear Sir, yours, &c.

No. CLXI.

TO MISS DAVIES.

It is impossible, Madam, that the generous warmth and angelic purity of your youthful mind, can have any idea of that moral disease under which I unhappily must rank as the chief of sinners; I mean a torpitude of the moral powers that may be called, a lethargy of conscience.—In vain remorse rears her horrent crest, and rouses all her snakes; beneath the deadly fixed eye and leaden hand of indolence, their wildest ire is charmed into the torpor of the bat, slumbering out the rigours of winter in the

chink of a ruined wall. Nothing less, Madam, could have made me so long neglect your obliging commands. Indeed I had one apology—the bagatelle was not worth presenting. Besides, so strongly am I interested in Miss D——'s fate and welfare in the serious business of life, amid its chances and changes; that to make her the subject of a silly ballad, is downright mockery of these ardent feelings; 'tis like an impertinent jest to a dying friend.

Gracious Heaven! why this disparity between our wishes and our powers? Why is the most generous wish to make others blest, impotent and ineffectual—as the idle breeze that crosses the pathless desert? In my walks of life I have met with a few people to whom how gladly would I have said—"Go, be happy! I know that your hearts have been wounded by the scorn of the proud, whom accident has placed above you—or worse still, in whose hand are, perhaps, placed many of the comforts of your life. But there! ascend that rock, Independence, and look justly down on their littleness of soul. Make the worthless tremble under your indignation, and the foolish sink before your contempt; and largely impart that happiness to others, which, I am certain, will give yourselves so much pleasure to bestow!"

Why, dear Madam, must I wake from this delightful reverie, and find it all a dream? Why, amid my generous enthusiasm, must I find myself poor and powerless, incapable of wiping one tear from the eye of pity, or of adding one comfort to the friend I love!—Out upon the world! say I, that its affairs are administered so ill? They talk of reform;—good Heaven! what a reform would I make among the sons, and even the daughters of men!—Down, immediately, should go fools from the high places where misbegotten chance has perked them up, and through life should they skulk, ever haunted by their native insignificance, as the body marches accompanied by its shadow.—As for a much more formidable class, the knaves, I am at a loss what to do with them: Had I a world, there should not be a knave in it.

. . . . . .

But the hand that could give, I would liberally fill; and I would pour delight on the heart that could kindly forgive, and generously love.

Still the inequalities of his life are, among men, comparatively tolerable—but there is a delicacy, a tenderness, accompanying every view in which we can place lovely Woman, that are grated and shocked at the rude, capricious distinctions of fortune. Woman is the blood-royal of life: let there be slight degrees of precedency among them—but let them be ALL sacred. Whether this last sentiment be right or wrong, I am not accountable; it is an original component feature of my mind.

No. CLXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP

Ellisland, 17th December, 1791.

MANY thanks to you, Madam, for your good news respecting the little floweret and the mother plant. I hope my poetic prayers have been heard, and will be answered up to the warmest sincerity of their fullest extent; and then Mrs. Henri will find her little darling the representative of his late parent, in every thing but his abridged existence.

I have just finished the following song, which, to a lady the descendant of Wallace, and many heroes of his truly illustrious line, and herself the mother of several soldiers, needs neither preface nor apology.

(*Death Song.* *See p.* 230)

. . . . . .

The circumstance that gave rise to the foregoing verses was, looking over, with a musical friend, M'Donald's collection of Highland airs; I was struck with one, an Isle of Skye tune, entitled *Oran an Aoig*, or, *The Song of Death*, to the measure of which I have adapted my stanzas. I have of late composed two or three other little pieces, which ere yon full orbed moon, whose broad impudent face now stares at old mother earth all night, shall have shrunk into a modest crescent, just peeping forth at dewy dawn, I shall find an hour to transcribe for you. *A Dieu je vous commende!*

LETTERS, 1792.

No. CLXIII.

TO FRANCIS GROSE, Esq. F.A.S.

SIR, 1792.

I BELIEVE among all our Scots literati you have not met with Professor Dugald Stewart, who fills the moral philosophy chair in the University of Edinburgh. To say that he is a man of the first parts, and what is more, a man of the first worth, to a gentleman of your general acquaintance, and who so much enjoys the luxury of unencumbered freedom and undisturbed privacy, is not perhaps recommendation enough: —but when I inform you that Mr. Stewart's principal characteristic is your favourite feature; *that* sterling independence of mind, which, though every man's right, so few men have the courage to claim, and fewer still the magnanimity to support:—When I tell you, that unseduced by splendour, and undisgusted by wretchedness, he appreciates the merits of the various actors in the great drama of life, merely as they

perform their parts—in short, he is a man after your own heart, and I comply with his earnest request in letting you know that he wishes above all things to meet with you. His house, Catrine, is within less than a mile of Sorn Castle, which you proposed visiting; or if you could transmit him the enclosed, he would with the greatest pleasure, meet you any where in the neighbourhood. I write to Ayrshire to inform Mr. Stewart that I have acquitted myself of my promise. Should your time and spirits permit your meeting with Mr. Stewart, 'tis well; if not, I hope you will forgive this liberty, and I have at least an opportunity of assuring you with what truth and respect,

I am, Sir,
Your great admirer,
And very humble servant.

No. CLXIV.

TO THE SAME.

Among the many witch stories I have heard relating to Alloway kirk, I distinctly remember only two or three.

Upon a stormy night, amid whistling squalls of wind, and bitter blasts of hail; in short, on such a night as the devil would choose to take the air in; a farmer or farmer's servant was plodding and plashing homeward with his plough irons on his shoulder, having been getting some repairs on them at a neighbouring smithy. His way lay by the kirk of Alloway, and being rather on the anxious look out in approaching a place so well known to be a favourite haunt of the devil and the devil's friends and emissaries, he was struck aghast by discovering through the horrors of the storm and stormy night, a light, which, on his nearer approach, plainly showed itself to proceed from the haunted edifice. Whether he had been fortified from above on his devout supplication, as is customary with people when they suspect the immediate presence of Satan; or whether, according to another custom, he had got courageously drunk at the smithy, I will not pretend to determine; but so it was that he ventured to go up to, nay into the very kirk. As good luck would have it his temerity came off unpunished.

The members of the infernal junto were all out on some midnight business or other, and he saw nothing but a kind of kettle or caldron, depending from the roof, over the fire, simmering some heads of unchristened children, limbs of executed malefactors, &c. for the business of the night.—It was, in for a penny, in for a pound, with the honest ploughman: so without ceremony he unhooked the caldron from off the fire, and pouring out the damnable ingredients, inverted it on his head, and carried it fairly home, where it remained long in the family, a living evidence of the truth of the story.

Another story which I can prove to be equally authentic, was as follows:—

On a market day in the town of Ayr, a farmer from Carrick, and consequently whose way lay by the very gate of Alloway kirk-yard, in order to cross the river Doon at the old bridge, which is about two or three hundred yards further on than the said gate, had been detained by his business, till by the time he reached Alloway it was the wizard hour, between night and morning.

Though he was terrified, with a blaze streaming from the kirk, yet as it is a well-known fact that to turn back on these occasions is running by far the greatest risk of mischief, he prudently advanced on his road. When he had reached the gate of the kirk-yard, he was surprised and entertained, through the ribs and arches of an old gothic window, which still faces the highway, to see a dance of witches merrily footing it round their old sooty blackguard master, who was keeping them all alive with the power of his bagpipe. The farmer stopping his horse to observe them a little, could plainly descry the faces of many old women of his acquaintance and neighbourhood. How the gentleman was dressed, tradition does not say; but the ladies were all in their smocks: and one of them happening unluckily to have a smock which was considerably too short to answer all the purpose of that piece of dress, our farmer was so tickled, that he involuntarily burst out, with a loud laugh, "Weel luppen, Maggy wi' the short sark!" and recollecting himself, instantly spurred his horse to the top of his speed. I need not mention the universally known fact, that no diabolical power can pursue you beyond the middle of a running stream. Lucky it was for the poor farmer that the river Doon was so near, for notwithstanding the speed of his horse, which was a good one, against he reached the middle of the arch of the bridge, and consequently the middle of the stream, the pursuing, vengeful hags, were so close at his heels, that one of them actually sprung to seize him; but it was too late, nothing was on her side of the stream but the horse's tail, which immediately gave way at her infernal grip, as if blasted by a stroke of lightning; but the farmer was beyond her reach. However, the unsightly, tail-less condition of the vigorous steed was to the last hour of the noble creature's life, an awful warning to the Carrick farmers, not to stay too late in Ayr markets.

The last relation I shall give, though equally true, is not so well identified as the two former, with regard to the scene: but as the best authorities give it for Alloway, I shall relate it.

On a summer's evening, about the time that nature puts on her sables to mourn the expiry of the chearful day, a shepherd boy belonging to a farmer in the immediate neighbourhood of Alloway kirk, had just folded his charge, and was returning home. As he passed the kirk, in the adjoining field, he fell in with a crew of

men and women, who were busy pulling stems of the plant ragwort. He observed that as each person pulled a ragwort, he or she got astride of it, and called out, "up horsie!" on which the ragwort flew off, like Pegasus, through the air with its rider. The foolish boy likewise pulled his ragwort, and cried with the rest, "up horsie!" and, strange to tell, away he flew with the company. The first stage at which the cavalcade stopt, was a merchant's wine cellar in Bourdeaux, where, without saying by your leave, they quaffed away at the best the cellar could afford, until the morning, foe to the imps and works of darkness, threatened to throw light on the matter, and frightened them from their carousals.

The poor shepherd lad, being equally a stranger to the scene and the liquor, heedlessly got himself drunk; and when the rest took horse, he fell asleep, and was found so next day by some of the people belonging to the merchant. Somebody that understood Scotch, asking him what he was, he said he was such-a-one's herd in Alloway, and by some means or other getting home again, he lived long to tell the world the wondrous tale.

I am, &c. &c.*

No. CLXV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

5th January, 1792.

You see my hurried life, Madam: I can only command starts of time; however, I am glad of one thing; since I finished the other sheet, the political blast that threatened my welfare is overblown. I have corresponded with Commissioner Graham, for the Board had made me the subject of their animadversions; and now I have the pleasure of informing you, that all is set to rights in that quarter. Now, as to these informers, may the devil be let loose to —— but hold! I was praying most fervently in my last sheet, and I must not so soon fall a swearing in this.

Alas! how little do the wantonly or idly officious think what mischief they do by their malicious insinuations, indirect impertinence, or thoughtless blabbings. What a difference there is in intrinsic worth, candour, benevolence, generosity, kindness—in all the charities and all the virtues, between one class of human beings and another. For instance, the amiable circle I so lately mixed with in the hospitable hall of D——, their generous hearts—their uncontaminated dignified minds—their informed and polished understandings—what a contrast, when compared—if such comparing were not downright sacrilege—with the soul of the miscreant who can deliberately plot the destruction of an honest man that never offended him, and with a grin of satisfaction see the unfortunate being, his faithful wife, and prattling innocents, turned over to beggary and ruin!

Your cup, my dear Madam, arrived safe. I had two worthy fellows dining with me the other day, when I, with great formality, produced my whigmeleerie cup, and told them that it had been a family-piece among the descendants of Sir William Wallace. This roused such an enthusiasm, that they insisted on bumpering the punch round in it; and by and bye, never did your great ancestor lay a *Southron* more completely to rest than for a time did your cup my two friends. Apropos, this is the season of wishing. May God bless you, my dear friend, and bless me the humblest and sincerest of your friends, by granting you yet many returns of the season! May all good things attend you and yours wherever they are scattered over the earth!

No. CLXVI.

TO MR. WILLIAM SMELLIE, PRINTER.

Dumfries, 22d January, 1792.

I sit down, my dear Sir, to introduce a young lady to you, and a lady in the first ranks of fashion too. What a task! to you—who care no more for the herd of animals called young ladies, than you do for the herd of animals called young gentlemen. To you—who despise and detest the groupings and combinations of fashion, as an idiot painter that seems industrious to place staring fools and unprincipled knaves in the foreground of his picture, while men of sense and honesty are too often thrown in the dimmest shades. Mrs. Riddel, who will take this letter to town with her and send it to you, is a character that, even in your own way, as a naturalist and a philosopher, would be an acquisition to your acquaintance. The lady too is a votary of the muses; and as I think myself somewhat of a judge in my own trade, I assure you that her verses, always correct, and often elegant, are much beyond the common run of the *lady-poetesses* of the day. She is a great admirer of your book, and hearing me say that I was acquainted with you, she

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* This letter was copied from the *Censura Literaria*, 1786. It was communicated to the editor of that work by Mr. Gilchrist of Stamford, with the following remark.

"In a collection of miscellaneous papers of the Antiquary Grose, which I purchased a few years since, I found the following letter written to him by Burns, when the former was collecting the Antiquities of Scotland: When I premise it was on the second tradition that he afterwards formed the inimitable tale of "Tam O'Shanter," I cannot doubt of its being read with great interest. It were "burning day-light" to point out to a reader, (and who is not a reader of Burns?) the thoughts he afterwards transplanted into the rhythmical narrative."

O. G.

begged to be known to you, as she is just going to pay her first visit to our Caledonian capital. I told her that her best way was to desire her near relation, and your intimate friend, Craigdarroch, to have you at his house while she was there; and lest you might think of a lively West Indian girl of eighteen, as girls of eighteen too often deserve to be thought of, I should take care to remove that prejudice. To be impartial, however, in appreciating the lady's merits, she has one unlucky failing, a failing which you will easily discover, as she seems rather pleased with indulging in it; and a failing that you will as easily pardon, as it is a sin which very much besets yourself;—where she dislikes or despises, she is apt to make no more a secret of it, than where she esteems and respects.

I will not present you with the unmeaning *compliments of the season*, but I will send you my warmest wishes and most ardent prayers, that FORTUNE may never throw your SUBSISTENCE to the mercy of a KNAVE, or set your CHARACTER on the judgment of a FOOL, but that, upright and erect, you may walk to an honest grave, where men of letters shall say, here lies a man who did honour to science; and men of worth shall say, here lies a man who did honour to human nature!

No. CLXVII.

TO MR. W. NICOLL.

20th February, 1792.

O THOU, wisest among the wise, meridian blaze of prudence, full moon of discretion, and chief of many counsellors! How infinitely is thy puddle-headed, rattle-headed, wrong-headed, round-headed slave indebted to thy supereminent goodness, that from the luminous path of thy own right-lined rectitude, thou lookest benignly down on an erring wretch, of whom the zig-zag wanderings defy all the powers of calculation, from the simple copulation of units, up to the hidden mysteries of fluxions! May one feeble ray of that light of wisdom which darts from thy sensorium, straight as the arrow of heaven, and bright as the meteor of inspiration, may it be my portion, so that I may be less unworthy of the face and favour of that father of proverbs and master of maxims, that antipode of folly, and magnet among the sages, the wise and witty Willie Nicoll! Amen! Amen! Yea, so be it!

For me! I am a beast, a reptile, and know nothing! From the cave of my ignorance, amid the fogs of my dulness, and pestilential fumes of my political heresies, I look up to thee, as doth a toad through the iron-barred lucerne of a pestiferous dungeon, to the cloudless glory of a summer sun! Sorely sighing in bitterness of soul, I say, when shall my name be the quotation of the wise, and my countenance be the delight of the godly, like the illustrious lord of Laggan's many hills?* As for him, his works are perfect; never did the pen of calumny blur the fair page of his reputation, nor the bolt of hatred fly at his dwelling.

. . . . . .

Thou mirror of purity, when shall the elfine lamp of my glimmerous understanding, purged from sensual appetites and gross desires, shine like the constellation of thy intellectual powers. —As for thee, thy thoughts are pure, and thy lips are holy. Never did the unhallowed breath of the powers of darkness, and the pleasures of darkness, pollute the sacred flame of thy sky-descended and heaven-bound desires; never did the vapours of impurity stain the unclouded serene of thy cerulean imagination. O that like thine were the tenor of my life, like thine the tenor of my conversation! then should no friend fear for my strength, no enemy rejoice in my weakness! Then should I lie down and rise up, and none to make me afraid.—May thy pity and thy prayer be exercised for, O thou lamp of wisdom and mirror of morality! thy devoted slave.†

No. CLXVIII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

3d March, 1792.

SINCE I wrote to you the last lugubrious sheet, I have not had time to write you farther. When I say that I had not time, that, as usual, means, that the three demons, indolence, business, and ennui, have so completely shared my hours among them, as not to leave me a five minutes fragment to take up a pen in.

Thank heaven, I feel my spirits buoying upwards with the renovating year. Now I shall in good earnest take up Thomson's songs. I dare say he thinks I have used him unkindly, and I must own with too much appearance of truth. Apropos, do you know the much admired old Highland air called *The Sutor's Dochter?* It is a first-rate favourite of mine, and I have written what I reckon one of my best songs to it. I will send it to you as it was sung with great applause in some fashionable circles by Major Robertson, of Lude, who was here with his corps.

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There is one commission that I must trouble you with. I lately lost a valuable seal, a pre-

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* Mr. Nicoll.

† This strain of irony was excited by a letter of Mr Nicoll's containing good advice.

sent from a departed friend, which vexes me much. I have gotten one of your Highland pebbles, which I fancy would make a very decent one; and I want to cut my armorial bearing on it; will you be so obliging as inquire what will be the expense of such a business? I do not know that my name is matriculated, as the heralds call it, at all; but I have invented arms for myself, so you know I shall be chief of the name; and by courtesy of Scotland, will likewise be entitled to supporters. These, however, I do not intend having on my seal. I am a bit of a herald; and shall give you, *secundum artem*, my arms. On a field, azure, a holly bush, seeded, proper, in base; a shepherd's pipe and crook, saltierwise, also proper, in chief. On a wreath of the colours, a wood-lark perching on a sprig of bay-tree, proper: for crest, two mottoes, round the top of the crest, *Wood-notes wild*. At the bottom of the shield, in the usual place, *Better a wee bush than nae bield*. By the shepherd's pipe and crook I do not mean the nonsense of painters of Arcadia; but a *Stock and Horn*, and a *Club*, such as you see at the head of Allan Ramsay, in Allan's quarto edition of the *Gentle Shepherd*. By the bye, do you know Allan? He must be a man of very great genius.—Why is he not more known?—Has he no patrons? or do "Poverty's cold wind and crushing rain beat keen and heavy" on him? I once, and but once, got a glance of that noble edition of the noblest pastoral in the world, and dear as it was, I mean dear as to my pocket, I would have bought it; but I was told that it was printed and engraved for subscribers only. He is the *only* artist who has hit *genuine* pastoral costume. What, my dear Cunningham, is there in riches, that they narrow and harden the heart so? I think that were I as rich as the sun, I should be as generous as the day; but as I have no reason to imagine my soul a nobler one than any other man's, I must conclude that wealth imparts a bird-lime quality to the possessor, at which the man, in his native poverty, would have revolted. What has led me to this, is the idea of such merit as Mr. Allan possesses, and such riches as a nabob or governor-contractor possesses, and why they do not form a mutual league. Let wealth shelter and cherish unprotected merit, and the gratitude and celebrity of that merit will richly repay it.

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No. CLXIX.

TO MR. T. CLARKE, EDINBURGH.

July 16, 1792.

MR. BURNS begs leave to present his most respectful compliments to Mr. Clarke.—Mr. B. some time ago did himself the honour of writing Mr. C. respecting coming out to the country to give a little musical instruction in a highly respectable family, where Mr. C. may have his own terms, and may be as happy as indolence, the Devil, and the gout will permit him. Mr. B. knows well how Mr. C. is engaged with another family; but cannot Mr. C. find two or three weeks to spare to each of them? Mr. B. is deeply impressed with, and awfully conscious of, the high importance of Mr. C's time, whether in the winged moments of symphonious exhibition, at the keys of harmony, while listening Seraphs cease their own less delightful strains;—or in the drowsy hours of slumberous repose, in the arms of his dearly-beloved elbow-chair, where the frowsy, but potent power of indolence, circumfuses her vapours round, and sheds her dews on, the head of her darling son.—But half a line conveying half a meaning from Mr. C. would make Mr. B. the very happiest of mortals.

No. CLXX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Annan Water Foot, 22d August, 1792.

Do not blame me for it, Madam—my own conscience, hackneyed and weather-beaten as it is, in watching and reproving my vagaries, follies, indolence, &c. has continued to blame and punish me sufficiently.

. . . . . .

Do you think it possible, my dear and honoured friend, that I could be so lost to gratitude for many favours; to esteem for much worth, and to the honest, kind, pleasurable tie of, now, old acquaintance, and I hope and am sure of progressive increasing friendship—as, for a single day, not to think of you—to ask the Fates what they are doing and about to do with my much loved friend and her wide-scattered connexions, and to beg of them to be as kind to you and yours as they possibly can.

Apropos (though how it is apropos, I have not leisure to explain), do you know that I am almost in love with an acquaintance of yours?—Almost! said I—I am in love, souse! over head and ears, deep as the most unfathomable abyss of the boundless ocean; but the word, Love, owing to the *intermingledoms* of the good and the bad, the pure and the impure, in this world, being rather an equivocal term for expressing one's sentiments and sensations, I must do justice to the sacred purity of my attachment. Know then, that the heart-struck awe; the distant humble approach; the delight we should have in gazing upon and listening to a Messenger of Heaven, appearing in all the unspotted purity of his celestial home, among the coarse, polluted, far inferior sons of men, to deliver to them tidings that make their hearts swim in joy

and their imaginations soar in transport—such, so delighting, and so pure, were the emotions of my soul on meeting the other day with Miss L— B—, your neighbour at M———. Mr. B. with his two daughters, accompanied by Mr. H. of G. passing through Dumfries a few days ago, on their way to England, did me the honour of calling on me; on which I took my horse (though God knows I could ill spare the time), and accompanied them fourteen or fifteen miles, and dined and spent the day with them. 'Twas about nine, I think, when I left them; and riding home, I composed the following ballad, of which you will probably think you have a dear bargain, as it will coast you another groat of postage. You must know that there is an old ballad beginning with

"My bonnie Lizzie Baillie
I'll row thee in my plaidie," &c.

So I parodied it as follows, which is literally the first copy, "unanointed unannealed," as Hamlet says.—*See p.* 194.

So much for ballads. I regret that you are gone to the east country, as I am to be in Ayrshire in about a fortnight. This world of ours, notwithstanding it has many good things in it, yet it has ever had this curse, that two or three people who would be the happier the oftener they met together, are, almost without exception, always so placed as never to meet but once or twice a-year, which, considering the few years of a man's life, is a very great "evil under the sun," which I do not recollect that Solomon has mentioned in his catalogue of the miseries of man. I hope and believe that there is a state of existence beyond the grave, where the worthy of this life will renew their former intimacies, with this endearing addition, that "we meet to part no more."

. . . . . .

"Tell us, ye dead,
Will none of you in pity disclose the secret
What 'tis you are, and we must shortly be!"

A thousand times have I made this apostrophe to the departed sons of men, but not one of them has ever thought fit to answer the question. "O that some courteous ghost would blab it out!"—but it cannot be; you and I, my friend, must make the experiment by ourselves and for ourselves. However, I am so convinced that an unshaken faith in the doctrines of religion is not only necessary, by making us better men, but also by making us happier men, that I shall take every care that your little god-son, and every little creature that shall call me father, shall be taught them.

So ends this heterogeneous letter, written at this wild place of the world, in the intervals of my labour of discharging a vessel of rum from Antigua.

No. CLXVII

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Dumfries, 10th September, 1792.

No! I will not attempt an apology.—Amid all my hurry of business, grinding the face of the publican and the sinner on the merciless wheels of the excise; making ballads, and then drinking, and singing them; and, over and above all, the correcting the press-work of two different publications; still, still I might have stolen five minutes to dedicate to one of the first of my friends and fellow-creatures. I might have done, as I do at present, snatched an hour near "witching time of night"—and scrawled a page or two. I might have congratulated my friend on his marriage; or I might have thanked the Caledonian archers for the honour they have done me (though to do myself justice, I intended to have done both in rhyme, else I had done both long ere now.) Well, then, here is to your good health! for you must know, I have set a nipperkin of toddy by me, just by way of spell, to keep away the meikle horned Deil, or any of his subaltern imps who may be on their nightly rounds.

But what shall I write to you?—"The voice said cry," and I said, "what shall I cry?"—O, thou spirit! whatever thou art, or wherever thou makest thyself visible! be thou a bogle by the eerie side of an auld thorn, in the dreary glen through which the herd callan maun bicker in his gloamin route frae the faulde! Be thou a brownie, set, at dead of night, to thy task by the blazing ingle, or in the solitary barn where the repercussions of thy iron flail affright thyself, as thou performest the work of twenty of the sons of men, ere the cock-crowing summon thee to thy ample cog of substantial brose.—Be thou a kelpie, haunting the ford or ferry, in the starless night, mixing thy laughing yell with the howling of the storm, and the roaring of the flood, as thou viewest the perils and miseries of man on the foundering horse, or in the tumbling boat!—Or, lastly, be thou a ghost, paying thy nocturnal visits to the hoary ruins of decayed grandeur; or performing thy mystic rites in the shadow of thy time-worn church, while the moon looks, without a cloud, on the silent, ghastly dwellings of the dead around thee; or taking thy stand by the bedside of the villain, or the murderer, pourtraying on his dreaming fancy, pictures, dreadful as the horrors of unveiled hell, and terrible as the wrath of incensed Deity!—Come, thou spirit, but not in these horrid forms; come with the milder, gentle, easy inspirations, which thou breathest round the wig of a prating advocate, or the tete of a tea-sipping gossip, while their tongues run at the light-horse gallop of clishmaclaver for ever and ever—come and assist a poor devil who is quite jaded in the attempt to share half an idea among half a hundred words; to fill up four quarto pages, while he has not got one single

sentence of recollection, information, or remark worth putting pen to paper for.

I feel, I feel the presence of supernatural assistance! circled in the embrace of my elbow-chair, my breast labours, like the bloated Sybil on her three-footed stool, and like her too, labours with Nonsense.—Nonsense, auspicious name! Tutor, friend, and finger-post in the mystic mazes of law; the cadaverous paths of physic; and particularly in the sightless soarings of SCHOOL DIVINITY, who, leaving Common Sense confounded at his strength of pinion, Reason delirious with eyeing his giddy flight, and Truth creeping back into the bottom of her well, cursing the hour that ever she offered her scorned alliance to the wizard power of Theologic Vision—raves abroad on all the winds. "On earth Discord! a gloomy Heaven above, opening her jealous gates to the nineteen thousandth part of the tithe of mankind! and below, an inescapable and inexorable hell, expanding its leviathan jaws for the vast residue of mortals!!!" —O doctrine! comfortable and healing to the weary, wounded soul of a man! Ye sons and daughters of affliction, ye *pauvres miserables*, to whom day brings no pleasure, and night yields no rest, be comforted! "'Tis but *one* to nineteen hundred thousand that your situation will mend in this world;" so, alas! the experience of the poor and the needy too often affirms; and 'tis nineteen hundred thousand to *one*, by the dogmas of ———, that you will be damned eternally in the world to come!

But of all Nonsense, Religious Nonsense is the most nonsensical; so enough, and more than enough of it. Only, by the bye, will you, or can you tell me, my dear Cunningham, why a sectarian turn of mind has always a tendency to narrow and illiberalize the heart? They are orderly; they may be just; nay, I have known them merciful: but still your children of sanctity move among their fellow-creatures with a nostril snuffing putrescence, and a foot spurning filth, in short, with a conceited dignity that your titled . . . . . or any other of your Scottish lordlings of seven centuries standing, display when they accidentally mix among the many-aproned sons of mechanical life. I remember, in my plough-boy days, I could not conceive it possible that a noble lord could be a fool, or a godly man could be a knave.—How ignorant are plough-boys!—Nay, I have since discovered that a *godly woman* may be a ——!—But hold—Here's t'ye again—this rum is generous Antigua, so a very unfit menstruum for scandal.

Apropos, how do you like, I mean *really* like the married life! Ah, my friend! matrimony is quite a different thing from what your love-sick youths and sighing girls take it to be! But marriage, we are told, is appointed by God, and I shall never quarrel with any of his institutions. I am a husband of older standing than you, and shall give you *my* ideas of the conjugal state—(*en passant*, you know I am no Latinist, is not *conjugal* derived from *jugum*, a yoke?) Well, then, the scale of good-wifeship I divide into ten parts.—Good-nature, four; Good Sense, two; Wit, one; Personal Charms, viz. a sweet face, eloquent eyes, fine limbs, graceful carriage, (I would add a fine waist too, but that is so soon spoilt, you know), all these, one; as for the other qualities belonging to, or attending on, a wife, such as Fortune, Connections, Education, (I mean education extraordinary), Family Blood, &c. divide the two remaining degrees among them as you please; only, remember that all these minor properties must be expressed by *fractions*, for there is not any one of them, in the aforesaid scale, entitled to the dignity of an *integer*.

As for the rest of my fancies and reveries—how I lately met with Miss Lesly Baillie, the most beautiful, elegant woman in the world—how I accompanied her and her father's family fifteen miles on their journey, out of pure devotion, to admire the loveliness of the works of God, in such an unequalled display of them—how, in galloping home at night, I made a ballad on her, of which these two stanzas make a part—

Thou, bonnie Lesly, art a queen,
Thy subjects we before thee;
Thou, bonnie Lesly, art divine,
The hearts o' men adore thee.

The very Deil he could na scaith
Whatever wad belang thee!
He'd look into thy bonnie face
And say, "I canna wrang thee."

—behold all these things are written in the chronicles of my imagination, and shall be read by thee, my dear friend, and by thy beloved spouse, my other dear friend, at a more convenient season.

Now, to thee, and to thy before-designed *bosom*-companion, be given the precious things brought forth by the sun, and the precious things brought forth by the moon, and the benignest influence of the stars, and the living streams which flow from the fountains of life, and by the tree of life, for ever and ever!—Amen!

No. CLXVIII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

Dumfries, 24th September, 1792.

I HAVE this moment, my dear Madam, yours of the twenty-third. All your other kind reproaches, your news, &c. are out of my head when I read and think on Mrs. H——'s situation. Good God! a heart-wounded helpless young woman—in a strange, foreign land, and

that land convulsed with every horror, that can harrow the human feelings—sick—looking, longing for a comforter, but finding none—a mother's feelings, too—but it is too much: he who wounded (he only can) may He heal!*

. . . . . .

I wish the farmer great joy of his new acquisition to his family. . . . . I cannot say that I give him joy of his life as a farmer. 'Tis, as a farmer paying a dear, unconscionable rent, a *cursed life!* As to a laird farming his own property; sowing his own corn in hope; and reaping it, in spite of brittle weather, in gladness; knowing that none can say unto him, "what dost thou?"—fattening his herds; shearing his flocks; rejoicing at Christmas; and begetting sons and daughters, until he be the venerated, grey-haired leader of a little tribe—'tis a heavenly life! but Devil take the life of reaping the fruits that another must eat.

Well, your kind wishes will be gratified, as to seeing me when I make my Ayrshire visit. I cannot leave Mrs. B——, until her nine months' race is run, which may perhaps be in three or four weeks. She, too, seems determined to make me the patriarchal leader of a band. However, if Heaven will be so obliging as let me have them on the proportion of three boys to one girl, I shall be so much the more pleased. I hope, if I am spared with them, to show a set of boys that will do honour to my cares and name; but I am not equal to the task of rearing girls. Besides, I am too poor; a girl should always have a fortune. Apropos, your little god-son is thriving charmingly, but is a very devil. He, though two years younger, has completely mastered his brother. Robert is indeed the mildest, gentlest creature I ever saw. He has a most surprising memory, and is quite the pride of his schoolmaster.

You know how readily we get into prattle upon a subject dear to our heart: you can excuse t. God bless you and yours!

No. CLXIX.

TO THE SAME.

SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN WRITTEN ON THE DEATH OF MRS. H——, HER DAUGHTER.

I HAD been from home, and did not receive your letter until my return the other day. What shall I say to comfort you, my much-valued, much-afflicted friend! I can but grieve with you; consolation I have none to offer, except that which religion holds out to the children of affliction—*children of affliction!*—how just the expression! and like every other family, they have matters among them which they hear, see, and feel in a serious, all-important manner, of which the world has not, nor cares to have, any idea. The world looks indifferently on, makes the passing remark, and proceeds to the next novel occurrence.

Alas, Madam! who would wish for many years! What is it but to drag existence until our joys gradually expire and leave us in a night of misery; like the gloom which blots out the stars one by one, from the face of night, and leaves us, without a ray of comfort, in the howling waste!

I am interrupted, and must leave off. You shall soon hear from me again.

* This much-lamented lady was gone to the south of France with her infant son, where she died soon after

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No. CLXX.

TO THE SAME.

Dumfries, 6th December, 1792.

I SHALL be in Ayrshire, I think, next week; and if at all possible, I shall certainly, my much-esteemed friend, have the pleasure of visiting at Dunlop-house.

Alas, Madam! how seldom do we me meet in this world, that we have reason to congratulate ourselves on occasions of happiness! I have not passed half the ordinary term of an old man's life, and yet I scarcely look over the obituary of a newspaper, that I do not see some names that I have known, and which I, and other acquaintances, little thought to meet with there so soon. Every other instance of the mortality of our kind, makes us cast an anxious look into the dreadful abyss of uncertainty, and shudder with apprehensions for our own fate. But of how different an importance are the lives of different individuals? Nay, of what importance is one period of the same life, more than another? A few years ago, I could have lain down in the dust, "careless of the voice of the morning;" and now not a few, and these most helpless individuals, would, on losing me and my exertions, lose both their "staff and shield." By the way, these helpless ones have lately got an addition, Mrs. B. having given me a fine girl since I wrote you. There is a charming passage in Thomson's *Edward and Eleanora.*

"The valiant, in *himself,* what can he suffer—
Or what need he regard his *single* woes?" &c.

As I am got in the way of quotations, I shall give you another from the same piece, peculiarly, alas! too peculiarly apposite, my dear Madam, to your present frame of mind:

"Who so unworthy but may proudly deck him,
With his fair-weather virtue, that exults

Glad o'er the summer main? the tempest comes,
The rough winds rage aloud; when from the helm
This virtue shrinks, and in a corner lies,
Lamenting—Heavens! if privileged from trial,
How cheap a thing were virtue!"

I do not remember to have heard you mention Thomson's dramas. I pick up favourite quotations, and store them in my mind as ready armour, offensive, or defensive, amid the struggle of this turbulent existence. Of these is one, a very favourite one, from his *Alfred*,

" Attach thee firmly to the virtuous deeds
And offices of life; to life itself,
With all its vain and transient joys, sit loose."

Probably I have quoted some of these to you formerly, as indeed when I write from the heart, I am apt to be guilty of such repetitions. The compass of the heart, in the musical style of expression, is much more bounded than that of the imagination; so the notes of the former are extremely apt to run into one another; but in return for the paucity of its compass, its few notes are much more sweet. I must still give you another quotation, which I am almost sure I have given you before, but I cannot resist the temptation. The subject is religion—speaking of its importance to mankind, the author says,

" 'Tis this, my friend, that streaks our morning bright," &c. as in p. 49.

I see you are in for double postage, so I shall e'en scribble out t'other sheet. We in this country here have many alarms of the reforming, or rather the republican spirit of your part of the kingdom. Indeed we are a good deal in commotion ourselves. For me, I am a *placeman*, you know; a very humble one indeed, Heaven knows, but still so much so as to gag me. What my private sentiments are, you will find out without an interpreter.

. . . . . .

I have taken up the subject in another view; and the other day, for a pretty actress's benefit-night, I wrote an address, which I will give you on the other page, called *The Rights of Woman.*

. . . . . .

THE RIGHTS OF WOMAN.

An Occasional Address spoken by MISS FONTENELLE *on her benefit night.*

While Europe's eye is fix'd on mighty things,
The fate of empires and the fall of kings,
While Quacks of state must each produce his plan,
And even children lisp *the Rights of Man;*
Amid this mighty fuss just let me mention,
The Rights of Woman merit some attention.

First, in the sexes' intermix'd connexion,
One sacred Right of Woman is *protection.*
The tender flower that lifts its head, elate,
Helpless, must fall before the blast of fate,
Sunk to the earth, defaced its lovely form,
Unless your shelter ward th' impending storm.—

Our second Right's—but needless here is caution,
To keep that right inviolate's the fashion,
Each man of sense has it so full before him,
He'd die before he'd wrong it—'tis *decorum.*—
There was, indeed, in far less polish'd days,
A time, when rough rude men had naughty ways:
Would swagger, swear, get drunk, kick up a riot,
Nay, even thus invade a lady's quiet.—
Now, thank our stars! these Gothic times are fled:
Now, well-bred men—and you are all well-bred—
Most justly think (and we are much the gainers)
Such conduct neither spirit, wit, nor manners.*

For Right the third, our last, our best, our dearest,
That right to fluttering female hearts the nearest,
Which even the Rights of Kings in low prostration
Most humbly own—'tis dear, dear *admiration!*
In that blest sphere alone we live and move;
There taste that life of life—immortal love—
Smiles, glances, sighs, tears, fits, flirtations, airs,
'Gainst such an host what flinty savage dares—
When awful Beauty joins with all her charms,
Who is so rash as rise in rebel arms?

But truce with kings, and truce with constitutions,
With bloody armaments and revolutions;
Let majesty your first attention summon,
Ah! ca ira! THE MAJESTY OF WOMAN!

I shall have the honour of receiving your criticisms in person at Dunlop.

No. CLXXI.

TO R. GRAHAM, ESQ. FINTRY.

SIR, *December*, 1792.

I HAVE been surprised, confounded, and distracted, by Mr. Mitchell, the collector, telling me that he has received an order from your

* Ironical allusion to the saturnalia of the *Caledonian Hunt.*

Board to inquire into my political conduct, and blaming me as a person disaffected to Government. Sir, you are a husband—and a father.—You know what you would feel, to see the much-loved wife of your bosom, and your helpless, prattling little ones, turned adrift into the world, degraded and disgraced from a situation in which they had been respectable and respected, and left almost without the necessary support of a miserable existence. Alas, Sir! must I think that such, soon, will by my lot! and from the d-mned, dark insinuations of hellish groundless envy too! I believe, Sir, I may aver it, and in the sight of Omniscience, that I would not tell a deliberate falsehood, no, not though even worse horrors, if worse can be, than those I have mentioned, hung over my head; and I say, that the allegation, whatever villain has made it, is a lie! To the British Constitution, on revolution principles, next after my God, I am most devoutly attached! You, Sir, have been much and generously my friend.—Heaven knows how warmly I have felt the obligation, and how gratefully I have thanked you.—Fortune, Sir, has made you powerful, and me impotent; has given you patronage, and me dependence.—I would not, for my single self, call on your humanity; were such my insular, unconnected situation, I would despise the tear that now swells in my eye—I could brave misfortune, I could face ruin; for at the worst, "Death's thousand doors stand open;" but, good God! the tender concerns that I have mentioned, the claims and ties that I see at this moment, and feel around me, how they unnerve Courage, and wither Resolution! To your patronage, as a man of some genius, you have allowed me a claim; and your esteem, as an honest man, I know is my due: To these, Sir, permit me to appeal; by these may I adjure you to save me from that misery which threatens to overwhelm me, and which, with my latest breath I will say it, I have not deserved.

No. CLXXII.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

DEAR MADAM, *December* 31, 1792.

A HURRY of business, thrown in heaps by my absence, has until now prevented my returning my grateful acknowledgments to the good family of Dunlop, and you in particular, for that hospitable kindness which rendered the four days I spent under that genial roof, four of the pleasantest I ever enjoyed.—Alas, my dearest friend! how few and fleeting are those things we call pleasures! On my road to Ayrshire, I spent a night with a friend whom I much valued; a man whose days promised to be many; and on Saturday last we laid him in the dust!

January 2, 1793.

I HAVE just received yours of the 30th, and feel much for your situation. However, I heartily rejoice in your prospect of recovery from that vile jaundice. As to myself, I am better, though not quite free of my complaint.—You must not think, as you seem to insinuate, that in my way of life I want exercise. Of that I have enough; but occasional hard drinking is the devil to me. Against this I have again and again bent my resolution, and have greatly succeeded. Taverns I have totally abandoned: it is the private parties in the family way, among the hard drinking gentleman of the country, that do me the mischief—but even this I have more than half given over.

Mr. Corbet can be of little service to me at present; at least I should be shy of applying. I cannot possibly be settled as a supervisor, for several years. I must wait the rotation of the list, and there are twenty names before mine.—I might indeed get a job of officiating, where a settled supervisor was ill, or aged; but that hauls me from my family, as I could not remove them on such an uncertainty. Besides, some envious, malicious devil, has raised a little demur on my political principles, and I wish to let that matter settle before I offer myself too much in the eye of my superiors. I have set, henceforth, a seal on my lips, as to these unlucky politics; but to you, I must breathe my sentiments. In this, as in every thing else, I shall shew the undisguised emotions of the soul. War I deprecate: misery and ruin to thousands, are in the blast that announces the destructive demon. But

. . . . . .

The remainder of this letter has been torn away by some barbarous hand.

LETTERS, 1793.

No. CLXXIII.

TO MISS B———, OF YORK.

MADAM, 21*st March*, 1793.

AMONG many things for which I envy those hale, long-lived old fellows before the flood, is this in particular, that when they met with any body after their own heart, they had a charming long prospect of many, many happy meetings with them in after-life.

Now, in this short, stormy winter day of our fleeting existence, when you now and then, in the Chapter of Accidents, meet an individual whose acquaintance is a real acquisition, there are all the probabilities against you, that you shall never meet with that valued character more. On the other hand, brief as the miserable being is, it is none of the least of the miseries belonging to it, that if there is any miscreant whom you hate, or creature whom you despise, the ill run of the chances shall be so

against you, that in the overtakings, turnings, and jostlings of life, pop, at some unlucky corner, eternally comes the wretch upon you, and will not allow your indignation or contempt a moment's repose. As I am a sturdy believer in the powers of darkness, I take those to be the doings of that old author of mischief, the devil. It is well known that he has some kind of short-hand way of taking down our thoughts, and I make no doubt that he is perfectly acquainted with my sentiments respecting Miss B——; how much I admired her abilities and valued her worth, and how very fortunate I thought myself in her acquaintance. For this last reason, my dear Madam, I must entertain no hopes of the very great pleasure of meeting with you again.

Miss H—— tells me that she is sending a packet to you, and I beg leave to send you the enclosed sonnet, though to tell you the real truth, the sonnet is a mere pretence, that I may have the opportunity of declaring with how much respectful esteem I have the honour to be, &c.

No. CLXXIV.

TO PATRICK MILLER, Esq. OF DALSWINTON.

SIR, *April*, 1793.

My poems having just come out in another edition, will you do me the honour to accept of a copy? A mark of my gratitude to you, as a gentleman to whose goodness I have been much indebted; of my respect for you, as a patriot who, in a venal, sliding age, stands forth the champion of the liberties of my country; and of my veneration for you, as a man, whose benevolence of heart does honour to human nature.

There *was* a time, Sir, when I was your dependant: this language *then* would have been like the vile incense of flattery—I could not have used it.—Now that connection* is at an end, do me the honour to accept of this *honest* tribute of respect from, Sir,

Your much indebted humble Servant.

No. CLXXV.

TO JOHN FRANCIS ERSKINE, Esq.† OF MAR.

SIR, *Dumfries, 13th April*, 1793.

DEGENERATE as human nature is said to be; and in many instances, worthless and unprincipled it is; still there are bright examples to the contrary: examples that even in the eyes of superior beings, must shed a lustre on the name of man.

Such an example have I now before me, when you, Sir, came forward to patronise and befriend a distant obscure stranger, merely because poverty had made him helpless, and his British hardihood of mind had provoked the arbitrary wantonness of power. My much esteemed friend, Mr. Riddel of Glenriddel, has just read me a paragraph of a letter he had from you. Accept, Sir, of the silent throb of gratitude; for words would but mock the emotions of my soul.

You have been misinformed as to my final dismission from the Excise; I am still in the service.—Indeed, but for the exertions of a gentleman who must be known to you, Mr. Graham of Fintray, a gentleman who has ever been my warm and generous friend, I had, without so much as a hearing, or the slightest previous intimation, been turned adrift, with my helpless family, to all the horrors of want.—Had I had any other resource, probably I might have saved them the trouble of a dismission; but the little money I gained by my publication, is almost every guinea embarked, to save from ruin an only brother, who, though one of the worthiest, is by no means one of the most fortunate of men.

In my defence to their accusations, I said, that whatever might be my sentiments of republics, ancient or modern, as to Britain, I abjured the idea:—That a CONSTITUTION, which, in its original principles, experience had proved to be every way fitted for our happiness in society, it would be insanity to sacrifice to an untried visionary theory:—That, in consideration of my being situated in a department, however humble, immediately in the hands of people in power, I had forborne taking any active part, either personally, or as an author, in the present business of REFORM. But that, where I must declare my sentiments, I would say there existed a system of corruption between the executive power and the representative part of the legislature, which boded no good to our glorious CONSTITUTION; and which every patriotic Briton must wish to see amended.—Some such sentiments as these, I stated in a letter to my generous patron Mr. Graham, which he laid before the Board at large; where, it seems, my last remark gave great offence; and one of our su-

* Alluding to the time when he held the farm of Ellisland, as tenant to Mr. M.

† This gentleman, most obligingly favoured the Editor with a perfect copy of the original letter, and allowed him to lay it before the public.—It is partly printed in *Dr. Currie's Edition*.

It will be necessary to state, that in consequence of the poet's freedom of remark on public measures, maliciously misrepresented to the Board of Excise, he was represented as actually dismissed from his office.—This report induced Mr. Erskine to propose a subscription in his favour, which was refused by the poet with that elevation of sentiment that peculiarly characterised his mind, and which is so happily displayed in this letter. See letter No. 171, in the present volume, written by Burns, with even more than his accustomed pathos and eloquence, in further explanation.—CROMEK.

pervisors general, a Mr. Corbet, was instructed to inquire on the spot, and to document me—"that my business was to act, *not to think;* and that whatever might be men or measures, it was for me to be *silent* and *obedient.*"

Mr. Corbet was likewise my steady friend; so between Mr. Graham and him, I have been partly forgiven; only I understand that all hopes of my getting officially forward, are blasted.

Now, Sir, to the business in which I would more immediately interest you. The partiality of my COUNTRYMEN, has brought me forward as a man of genius, and has given me a character to support. In the POET I have avowed manly and independent sentiments, which I trust will be found in the MAN. Reasons of no less weight than the support of a wife and family, have pointed out as the eligible, and situated as I was, the only eligible line of life for me, my present occupation. Still my honest fame is my dearest concern; and a thousand times have I trembled at the idea of those *degrading* epithets that malice or misrepresentation may affix to my name. I have often, in blasting anticipation, listened to some future hackney scribbler, with the heavy malice of savage stupidity, exulting in his hireling paragraphs—"BURNS, notwithstanding the *fanfaronade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to public view, and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and slunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind."

In your illustrious hands, Sir, permit me to lodge my disavowal and defiance of these slanderous falsehoods.—BURNS was a poor man from birth, and an exciseman by necessity: but —I *will* say it! the sterling of his honest worth, no poverty could debase, and his independent British mind, oppression might bend, but could not subdue. Have not I, to me, a more precious stake in my country's welfare, than the richest dukedom in it?—I have a large family of children, and the prospect of many more. I have three sons, who, I see already, have brought into the world souls ill qualified to inhabit the bodies of SLAVES.—Can I look tamely on, and see any machination to wrest from them the birthright of my boys,—the little independent BRITONS, in whose veins runs my own blood?—No! I will not! should my heart's blood stream around my attempt to defend it!

Does any man tell me, that my full efforts can be of no service; and that it does not belong to my humble station to meddle with the concern of a nation?

I can tell him, that it is on such individuals as I, that a nation has to rest, both for the hand of support, and the eye of intelligence. The uninform'd MOB, may swell a nation's bulk; and the titled, tinsel, courtly throng, may be its feathered ornament; but the number of those who are elevated enough in life to reason and to reflect; yet low enough to keep clear of the venal contagion of a court;—these are a nation's strength.

I know not how to apologize for the impertinent length of this epistle; but one small request I must ask of you farther—When you have honoured this letter with a perusal, please to commit it to the flames. BURNS, in whose behalf you have so generously interested yourself, I have here, in his native colours drawn *as he is;* but should any of the people in whose hands is the very bread he eats, get the least knowledge of the picture, *it would ruin the poor* BARD *for ever!*

My poems having just come out in another edition, I beg leave to present you with a copy, as a small mark of that high esteem and ardent gratitude, with which I have the honour to be,

Sir,

Your deeply indebted,

And ever devoted humble servant.

No. CLXXVI.

TO MR. ROBERT AINSLIE.

April 26, 1793.

I AM d—mnably out of humour, my dear Ainslie, and that is the reason, why I take up the pen to *you:* 'tis the nearest way, (*probatum est*) to recover my spirits again.

I received your last, and was much entertained with it; but I will not at this time, nor at any other time, answer it.—Answer a letter? I never could answer a letter in my life!—I have written many a letter in return for letters I have received; but then—they were original matter —spurt-away! zig, here; zag, there; as if the Devil that, my grannie (an old woman indeed!) often told me, rode in will-o'-wisp, or, in her more classic phrase, SPUNKIE, were looking over my elbow.—Happy thought that idea has engendered in my head! SPUNKIE—thou shalt henceforth be my symbol, signature, and tutelary genius! Like thee, hap-step-and-lowp, here-awa-there-awa, higglety-pigglety, pell-mell, hither-and-yon, ram-stam, happy-go-lucky, up tails-a'-by-the-light-o'-the-moon; has been, is, and shall be, my progress through the mosses and moors of this vile, bleak, barren wilderness of a life of ours.

Come then my guardian spirit! like thee, may I skip away, amusing myself by and at my own light: and if any opaque-souled lubber of mankind complain that my elfine, lambent, glimmerous wanderings have misled his stupid steps over precipices, or into bogs; let the thick-headed Blunderbuss recollect, that he is not SPUNKIE:—that

SPUNKIE's wanderings could not copied be;
Amid these perils none durst walk but he.—

. . . . . .

I have no doubt but scholarcraft may be caught as a Scotsman catches the itch,—by friction. How else can you account for it, that born blockheads, by mere dint of *handling* books, grow so wise that even they themselves are equally convinced of and surprised at their own parts? I once carried this philosophy to that degree that in a knot of country folks who had a library amongst them, and who, to the honour of their good sense, made me factotum in the business; one of our members, a little, wise-looking, squat, upright, jabbering body of a tailor, I advised him, instead of turning over the leaves, *to bind the book on his back.*—Johnie took the hint; and as our meetings were every fourth Saturday, and Pricklouse having a good Scots mile to walk in coming, and, of course, another in returning, Bodkin was sure to lay his hands on some heavy quarto, or ponderous folio, with, and under which, wrapt up in his grey plaid, he grew wise, as he grew weary, all the way home. He carried this so far, that an old musty Hebrew concordance which we had in a present from a neighbouring priest, by mere dint of applying it, as doctors do a blistering plaister, between his shoulders, Stitch, in a dozen pilgrimages, acquired as much rational theology as the said priest had done by forty years perusal of the pages.

Tell me, and tell me truly, what you think of this theory.

Yours,
SPUNKIE.

No. CLXXVII.

TO MISS K———.

MADAM,

PERMIT me to present you with the enclosed song as a small though grateful tribute for the honour of your acquaintance. I have, in these verses, attempted some faint sketches of your portrait in the unembellished simple manner of descriptive TRUTH.—Flattery, I leave to your LOVERS, whose exaggerating fancies may make them imagine you still nearer perfection than you really are.

Poets, Madam, of all mankind, feel most forcibly the powers of BEAUTY; as, if they are really POETS of nature's making, their feelings must be finer, and their taste more delicate than most of the world. In the cheerful bloom of SPRING, or the pensive mildness of AUTUMN; the grandeur of SUMMER, or the hoary majesty of WINTER; the poet feels a charm unknown to the rest of his species. Even the sight of a fine flower, or the company of a fine woman (by far the finest part of God's works below), have sensations for the poetic heart that the HERD of man are strangers to.—On this last account, Madam, I am, as in many other things, indebted to Mr. Hamilton's kindness in introducing me to you. Your lovers may view you with a wish, I look on you with pleasure; their hearts, in your presence, may glow with desire, mine rises with admiration.

That the arrows of misfortune, however they should, as incident to humanity, glance a slight wound, may never reach your *heart*—that the snares of villany may never beset you in the road of life—that INNOCENCE may hand you by the path of HONOUR to the dwelling of PEACE, is the sincere wish of him who has the honour to be, &c.

No. CLXXVIII.

TO LADY GLENCAIRN.

MY LADY,

THE honour you have done your poor poet, in writing him so very obliging a letter, and the pleasure the enclosed beautiful verses have given him, came very seasonably to his aid amid the cheerless gloom and sinking despondency of diseased nerves and December weather (*supposed December*, 1793). As to forgetting the family of Glencairn, Heaven is my witness with what sincerity I could use those old verses which please me more in their rude simplicity than the most elegant lines I ever saw.

If thee Jerusalem I forget,
Skill part from my right hand.—

My tongue to my mouth's roof let cleave,
If I do thee forget
Jerusalem, and thee above
My chief joy do not set.—

When I am tempted to do any thing improper, I dare not, because I look on myself as accountable to your ladyship and family. Now and then when I have the honour to be called to the tables of the great, if I happen to meet with any mortification from the stately stupidity of self-sufficient squires, or the luxuriant insolence of upstart nabobs, I get above the creatures by calling to remembrance that I am patronized by the Noble House of Glencairn; and at gala-times, such as New-year's day, a christening, or the Kirn-night, when my punch-bowl is brought from its dusty corner and filled up in honour of the occasion, I begin with,—*The Countess of Glencairn!* My good woman with the enthusiasm of a grateful heart, next cries, *My Lord!* and so the toast goes on until I end with *Lady Harriet's little angel!* whose epithalamium I have pledged myself to write.

When I received your ladyship's letter, I was

just in the act of transcribing for you some verses I have lately composed; and meant to have sent them my first leisure hour, and acquainted you with my late change of life. I mentioned to my lord, my fears concerning my farm. Those fears were indeed too true; it is a bargain would have ruined me but for the lucky circumstance of my having an excise commission.

People may talk as they please, of the ignominy of the excise; £50 a year will support my wife and children and keep me independent of the world; and I would much rather have it said that my profession borrowed credit from me, than that I borrowed credit from my profession. Another advantage I have in this business, is the knowledge it gives me of the various shades of human character, consequently assisting me vastly in my poetic pursuits. I had the most ardent enthusiasm for the muses when nobody knew me, but myself, and that ardour is by no means cooled now that my Lord Glencairn's goodness has introduced me to all the world. Not that I am in haste for the press. I have no idea of publishing, else I certainly had consulted my noble generous patron; but after acting the part of an honest man, and supporting my family, my whole wishes and views are directed to poetic pursuits. I am aware that though I were to give performances to the world superior to my former works, still if they were of the same kind with those, the comparative reception they would meet with would mortify me. I have turned my thoughts on the drama. I do not mean the stately buskin of the tragic muse.

. . . . . .

Does not your ladyship think that an Edinburgh theatre would be more amused with affectation, folly and whim of true Scottish growth, than manners which by far the greatest part of the audience can only know at second hand?

I have the honour to be
Your ladyship's ever devoted
And grateful humble servant.

No. CLXXIX.

TO MISS CHALMERS.

MADAM, *August*, 1793.

Some rather unlooked-for accidents have prevented my doing myself the honour of a second visit to Arbiegland, as I was so hospitably invited, and so positively meant to have done.—However, I still hope to have that pleasure before the busy months of harvest begin.

I enclose you two of my late pieces, as some kind return for the pleasure I have received in perusing a certain MS. volume of poems in the possession of Captain Riddel. To repay one with an *old song*, is a proverb, whose force you, Madam, I know will not allow. What is said of illustrious descent is, I believe, equally true of a talent for poetry; none ever despised it who had pretensions to it. The fates and characters of the rhyming tribe often employ my thoughts when I am disposed to be melancholy. There is not, among all the martyrologies that ever were penned, so rueful a narrative as the lives of the poets.—In the comparative view of wretches, the criterion is not what they are doomed to suffer, but how they are formed to bear. Take a being of our kind, give him a stronger imagination and a more delicate sensibility, which between them will ever engender a more ungovernable set of passions than are the usual lot of man; implant in him an irresistible impulse to some idle vagary, such as, arranging wild flowers in fantastical nosegays, tracing the grasshopper to his haunt by his chirping song, watching the frisks of the little minnows in the sunny pool, or hunting after the intrigues of butterflies—in short, send him adrift after some pursuit which shall eternally mislead him from the path of lucre, and yet curse him with a keener relish than any man living, for the plasures that lucre can purchase; lastly, fill up the measure of his woes by bestowing on him a spurning sense of his own dignity, and you have created a wight nearly as miserable as a poet. To you, Madam, I need not recount the fairy pleasures the muse bestows to counterbalance this catalogue of evils. Bewitching poetry is like bewitching woman; she has in all ages been accused of misleading mankind from the counsels of wisdom and the paths of prudence, involving them in difficulties, baiting them with poverty, branding them with infamy, and plunging them in the whirling vortex of ruin; yet where is the man but must own that all happiness on earth is not worthy the name—that even the holy hermit's solitary prospect of paradisaical bliss is but the glitter of a northern sun, rising over a frozen region, compared with the many pleasures, the nameless raptures that we owe to the lovely Queen of the heart of Man!

No. CLXXX.

TO JOHN M'MURDO, Esq.

SIR, *December*, 1793.

It is said that we take the greatest liberties with our greatest friends, and I pay myself a very high compliment in the manner in which I am going to apply the remark. I have owed you money longer than ever I owed it to any man.—Here is Ker's account, and here are six guineas; and now, I don't owe a shilling to man—or woman either. But for these damned dirty, dog's ear'd little pages,* I had done myself the honour to have waited on you long ago. Independent of the obligations your hospitality

* Scottish bank-notes.

has laid me under, the consciousness of your superiority in the rank of man and gentleman, of itself was fully as much as I could ever make head against; but to owe you money too, was more than I could face.

I think I once mentioned something of a collection of Scotch songs I have for some years been making: I send you a perusal of what I have got together. I could not conveniently spare them above five or six days, and five or six glances of them will probably more than suffice you. A very few of them are my own. When you are tired of them, please leave them with Mr. Clint, of the King's Arms. There is not another copy of the collection in the world; and I shall be sorry that any unfortunate negligence should deprive me of what has cost me a good deal of pains.

LETTERS, 1794, 1795, 1796.

No. CLXXXI.

TO THE EARL OF BUCHAN,

WITH A COPY OF "BRUCE'S ADDRESS TO HIS TROOPS AT BANNOCKBURN."

MY LORD, *Dumfries, 12th Jan.* 1794.

WILL your lordship allow me to present you with the enclosed little composition of mine, as a small tribute of gratitude for that acquaintance with which you have been pleased to honour me. Independent of my enthusiasm as a Scotsman, I have rarely met with any thing in history which interest my feelings as a man, equal with the story of Bannockburn. On the one hand, a cruel, but able usurper, leading on the finest army in Europe to extinguish the last spark of freedom among a greatly-daring, and greatly-injured people: on the other hand, the desperate relics of a gallant nation, devoting themselves to rescue their bleeding country, or perish with her.

Liberty! thou art a prize truly, and indeed invaluable!—for never canst thou be too dearly bought!

I have the honour to be, &c.

No. CLXXXII.

TO MRS. RIDDEL,

WHO WAS TO BESPEAK A PLAY ONE EVENING AT THE DUMFRIES THEATRE.

I AM thinking to send my *Address* to some periodical publication, but it has not got your sanction, so pray look over it.

As to the Tuesday's play, let me beg of you, my dear Madam, let me beg of you to give us, *The Wonder, a Woman keeps a Secret;* to which please add, *The Spoiled Child*—you will highly oblige me by so doing.

Ah, what an enviable creature you are! There now, this cursed gloomy blue-devil day, you are going to a party of choice spirits—

"To play the shapes
Of frolic fancy, and incessant form
Those rapid pictures, that assembled train
Of fleet ideas, never join'd before,
Where lively *wit* excites to gay surprise;
Or folly, painting *humour*, grave himself,
Calls laughter forth, deep-shaking every nerve."

But as you rejoice with them that do rejoice, do also remember to weep with them that weep, and pity your melancholy friend.

No. CLXXXIII.

TO A LADY,

IN FAVOUR OF A PLAYER'S BENEFIT.

MADAM,

YOU were so very good as to promise me to honour my friend with your presence on his benefit-night. That night is fixed for Friday first: the play a most interesting one! *The way to keep Him.* I have the pleasure to know Mr. G. well. His merit as an actor is generally acknowledged. He has genius and worth which would do honour to patronage: he is a poor and modest man; claims which, from their very *silence*, have the more forcible power on the generous heart. Alas, for pity! that, from the indolence of those who have the good things of this life in their gift, too often does brazen-fronted importunity snatch that boon, the rightful due of retiring, humble, want! Of all the qualities we assign to the author and director of Nature, by far the most enviable is—to be able "To wipe away all tears from all eyes." O what insignificant, sordid wretches are they, however chance may have loaded them with wealth, who go to their graves, to their magnificent *mausoleums*, with hardly the consciousness of having made one poor honest heart happy!

But I crave your pardon, Madam; I came to beg, not to preach.

No. CLXXXIV.

EXTRACT OF A LETTER

TO MR. ———.

1794.

I AM extremely obliged to you for your kind mention of my interests, in a letter which Mr

S—— showed me. At present, my situation in life must be in a great measure stationary, at least for two or three years. The statement is this—I am on the supervisor's list; and as we come on there by precedency, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed *of course*—then a Friend might be of service to me in getting me into a place of the kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about a hundred and twenty, to two hundred a-year; but the business is an incessant drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collector's list; and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a-year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedency on the list, and have, besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure. A life of literary leisure, with a a decent competence, is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me, to say that I do not need or would not be indebted to a political friend; at the same time, Sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus, to hook my dependent situation on your benevolence. If, in my progress of life, an opening should occur where the good offices of a gentleman of your public character and political consequence might bring me forward, I will petition your goodness with the same frankness and sincerity as I now do myself the honour to subscribe myself, &c.

No. CLXXXV.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

DEAR MADAM,

I MEANT to have called on you yesternight, but as I edged up to your box-door, the first object which greeted my view, was one of those lobster-coated puppies, sitting like another dragon, guarding the Hesperian fruit. On the conditions and capitulations you so obligingly offer, I shall certainly make my weather-beaten rustic phiz a part of your box-furniture on Tuesday, when we may arrange the business of the visit.

. . . . . .

Among the profusion of idle compliments which insidious craft, or unmeaning folly incessantly offers at your shrine—a shrine, how far exalted above such adoration—permit me, were it but for rarity's sake, to pay you the honest tribute of a warm heart, and an independent mind; and to assure you, that I am, thou most amiable, and most accomplished of thy sex, with the most respectful esteem, and fervent regard, thine, &c.

No. CLXXXVI.

TO THE SAME.

I WILL wait on you, my ever-valued friend, but whether in the morning I am not sure. Sunday closes a period of our first revenue business, and may probably keep me employed with my pen until noon. Fine employment for a poet's pen! There is a species of the human genus that I call *the gin-horse class:* what enviable dogs they are. Round, and round, and round they go,—Mundell's ox that drives his cotton mill, is their exact prototype—without an idea or a wish beyond their circle: fat, sleek, stupid, patient, quiet, and contented; while here I sit, altogether Novemberish, a d—— melange of fretfulness and melancholy; not enough of the one to rouse me to passion, nor of the other to repose me in torpor; my soul flouncing and fluttering round her tenement, like a wild finch, caught amid the horrors of winter, and newly thrust into a cage. Well, I am persuaded that it was of me the Hebrew sage prophesied, when he foretold—"And behold, on whatsoever this man doth set his heart, it shall not prosper!" If my resentment is awakened, it is sure to be where it dare not squeak; and if—

. . . . . .

Pray that wisdom and bliss be more frequent visitors of

R. B.

No. CLXXXVII.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE this moment got the song from S——, and I am sorry to see that he has spoilt it a good deal. It shall be a lesson to me how I lend him any thing again.

I have sent you *Werter*, truly happy to have any the smallest opportunity of obliging you.

'Tis true, Madam, I saw you once since I was at W——; and that once froze the very life-blood of my heart. Your reception of me was such, that a wretch meeting the eye of his judge, about to pronounce sentence of death on him, could only have envied my feelings and situation. But I hate the theme, and never more shall write or speak on it.

One thing I shall proudly say, that I can pay Mrs. —— a higher tribute of esteem, and appreciate her amiable worth more truly, than any man whom I have seen approach her.

No. CLXXXVIII.

TO THE SAME.

I HAVE often told you, my dear friend, that you had a spice of caprice in your composition, and you have as often disavowed it, even perhaps while your opinions were, at the moment, irrefragably proving it. Could *any thing* estrange me from a friend such as you?—No! To-morrow I shall have the honour of waiting on you.

Farewell, thou first of friends, and most accomplished of women; even with all thy little caprices!

No. CLXXXIX.

TO THE SAME.

MADAM,

I RETURN your common-place book. I have perused it with much pleasure, and would have continued my criticisms, but as it seems the critic has forfeited your esteem, his strictures must lose their value.

If it is true that "offences come only from the heart," before you I am guiltless. To admire, esteem, and prize you, as the most accomplished of women, and the first of friends—if these are crimes, I am the most offending thing alive.

In a face where I used to meet the kind complacency of friendly confidence, *now* to find cold neglect, and contemptuous scorn—is a wrench that my heart can ill bear. It is, however, some kind of miserable good luck; that while *de-haut-en-bas* rigour may depress an unoffending wretch to the ground, it has a tendency to rouse a stubborn something in his bosom, which, though it cannot heal the wounds of his soul, is at least an opiate to blunt their poignancy.

With the profoundest respect for your abilities; the most sincere esteem, and ardent regard for your gentle heart and amiable manners; and the most fervent wish and prayer for your welfare, peace, and bliss, I have the honour to be, Madam, your most devoted humble servant.

No. CXC.

TO JOHN SYME, Esq.

You know that among other high dignities, you have the honour to be my supreme court of critical judicature, from which there is no appeal. I enclose you a song which I composed since I saw you, and I am going to give you the history of it. Do you know that among much that I admire in the characters and manners of those great folks whom I have now the honour to call my acquaintances, the O——— family, there is nothing charms me more than than Mr. O's unconcealable attachment to that incomparable woman. Did you ever, my dear Syme, meet with a man who owed more to the Divine Giver of all good things than Mr. O.? A fine fortune; a pleasing exterior; self-evident amiable dispositions, and an ingenious upright mind, and that informed too, much beyond the usual run of young fellows of his rank and fortune; and to all this, such a woman!—but of her I shall say nothing at all, in despair of saying any thing adequate: in my song, I have endeavoured to do justice to what would be his feelings on seeing, in the scene I have drawn, the habitation of his Lucy. As I am a good deal pleased with my performance, I in my first fervour thought of sending it to Mrs. O——, but on second thoughts, perhaps what I offer as the honest incense of genuine respect, might, from the well-known character of poverty and poetry, be construed into some modification or other of that servility which my soul abhors*.

CXCI.

TO MISS ———.

MADAM.

NOTHING short of a kind of absolute necessity could have made me trouble you with this letter. Except my ardent and just esteem for your sense, taste, and worth, every sentiment arising in my breast, as I put pen to paper to you, is painful. The scenes I have passed with the friend of my soul, and his amiable connexions! The wrench at my heart to think that he is gone, for ever gone from me, never more to meet in the wanderings of a weary world; and the cutting reflection of all, that I had most unfortunately, though most undeservedly, lost the confidence of that soul of worth, ere it took its flight.

These, Madam, are sensations of no ordinary anguish.—However, you, also, may be offended with some *imputed* improprieties of mine; sensibility you know I possess, and sincerity none will deny me.

To oppose those prejudices which have been raised against me, is not the business of this letter. Indeed it is a warfare I know not how to wage. The powers of positive vice I can in some degree calculate, and against direct malevolence I can be on my guard; but who can estimate the fatuity of giddy caprice, or ward off the unthinking mischief of precipitate folly?

I have a favour to request of you, Madam, and of your sister Mrs. ———, through your

* The song enclosed was the one beginning with, "O wat ye wha's in yon town."

means. You know, that, at the wish of my late friend, I made a collection of all my trifles in verse which I had ever written. They are many of them local, some of them puerile, and silly, and all of them unfit for the public eye. As I have some little fame at stake, a fame that I trust may live, when the hate of those who "watch for my halting," and the contumelious sneer of those whom accident has made my superiors, will, with themselves, be gone to the regions of oblivion; I am uneasy now for the fate of those manuscripts.—Will Mrs. —— have the goodness to destroy them, or return them to me? As a pledge of friendship they were bestowed; and that circumstance, indeed, was all their merit. Most unhappily for me, that merit they no longer possess, and I hope that Mrs. ——'s goodness, which I well know, and ever will revere, will not refuse this favour to a man whom she once held in some degree of estimation.

With the sincerest esteem I have the honour to be, Madam, &c.

No. CXCII.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

A MIND DISEASED.

25th February, 1794.

CANST thou minister to a mind diseased? Canst thou speak peace and rest to a soul tossed on a sea of troubles, without one friendly star to guide her course, and dreading that the next surge may overwhelm her? Canst thou give to a frame, tremblingly alive to the tortures of suspense, the stability and hardihood of the rock that braves the blast? If thou canst not do the least of these, why wouldst thou disturb me in my miseries, with thy inquiries after me?

. . . . . .

For these two months I have not been able to lift a pen. My constitution and frame were, *ab origine*, blasted with a deep incurable taint of hypochondria, which poisons my existence. Of late a number of domestic vexations, and some pecuniary share in the ruin of these —— times; losses which, though trifling, were yet what I could ill bear, have so irritated me, that my feelings at times could only be envied by a reprobate spirit listening to the sentence that dooms it to perdition.

Are you deep in the language of consolation? I have exhausted in reflection every topic of comfort. *A heart at ease* would have been charmed with my sentiments and reasonings; but as to myself, I was like Judas Iscariot preaching the gospel; he might melt and mould the hearts of those around him, but his own kept its native incorrigibility.

Still there are two great pillars that bear us up, amid the wreck of misfortune and misery. The ONE is composed of the different modifications of a certain noble, stubborn something in man, known by the names of courage, fortitude, magnanimity. The OTHER is made up of those feelings and sentiments, which, however the sceptic may deny them, or the enthusiast disfigure them, are yet, I am convinced, original and component parts of the human soul; those *senses of the mind*, if I may be allowed the expression, which connect us with, and link us to, those awful obscure realities — an all-powerful and equally beneficent God; and a world to come, beyond death and the grave. The first gives the nerve of combat, while a ray of hope beams on the field;—the last pours the balm of comfort into the wounds which time can never cure.

I do not remember, my dear Cunningham, that you and I ever talked on the subject of religion at all. I know some who laugh at it, as the trick of the crafty FEW, to lead the undiscerning MANY; or at most as an uncertain obscurity, which mankind can never know any thing of, and with which they are fools if they give themselves much to do. Nor would I quarrel with a man for his irreligion, any more than I would for his want of a musical ear. I would regret that he was shut out from what, to me and to others were such superlative sources of enjoyment. It is in this point of view, and for this reason, that I will deeply imbue the mind of every child of mine with religion. If my son should happen to be a man of feeling, sentiment, and taste, I shall thus add largely to his enjoyments. Let me flatter myself that this sweet little fellow who is just now running about my desk, will be a man of a melting, ardent, glowing heart; and an imagination, delighted with the painter, and rapt with the poet. Let me figure him, wandering out in a sweet evening, to inhale the balmy gales, and enjoy the growing luxuriance of the spring; himself the while in the blooming youth of life. He looks abroad on all nature, and through nature up to nature's God. His soul, by swift, delighting degrees, is wrapt above this sublunary sphere, until he can be silent no longer, and bursts out into the glorious enthusiasm of Thomson.—

"These, as they change, Almighty Father, these
Are but the varied God.—The rolling year
Is full of thee."

And so on, in all the spirit and ardour of that charming hymn.

These are no ideal pleasures; they are real delights, and I ask what of the delights among the sons of men are superior, not to say, equal to them? And they have this precious, vast addition, that conscious virtue stamps them for her own; and lays hold on them to bring herself into the presence of a witnessing, judging, and approving God.

No. CXCIII.

TO ———,

SUPPOSES HIMSELF TO BE WRITING FROM THE DEAD TO THE LIVING.

MADAM,

I DARE say this is the first epistle you ever received from this nether world. I write you from the regions of Hell, amid the horrors of the damned. The time and manner of my leaving your earth I do not exactly know; as I took my departure in the heat of a fever of intoxication, contracted at your too hospitable mansion; but on my arrival here, I was fairly tried and sentenced to endure the purgatorial tortures of this infernal confine, for the space of ninety-nine years, eleven months, and twenty-nine days; and all on accounnt of the impropriety of my conduct yesternight under your roof. Here am I, laid on a bed of pitiless furze, with my aching head reclined on a pillow of ever-piercing thorn, while an infernal tormentor, wrinkled, and old, and cruel, his name, I think, is *Recollection*, with a whip of scorpions, forbids peace or rest to approach me, and keeps anguish eternally awake. Still, Madam, if I could in any measure be reinstated in the good opinion of the fair circle whom my conduct last night so much injured, I think it would be an alleviation to my torments. For this reason I trouble you with this letter. To the men of the company I will make no apology.—Your husband, who insisted on my drinking more than I chose, has no right to blame me; and the other gentlemen were partakers of my guilt. But to you, Madam, I have much to apologize. Your good opinion I valued as one of the greatest acquisitions I had made on earth, and I was truly a beast to forfeit it. There was a Miss I—— too, a woman of fine sense, gentle and unassuming manners—do make, on my part, a miserable d—d wretch's best apology to her. A Mrs. G——, a charming woman, did me the honour to be prejudiced in my favour; this makes me hope that I have not outraged her beyond all forgiveness.—To all the other ladies please present my humblest contrition for my conduct, and my petition for their gracious pardon. O all ye powers of decency and decorum! whisper to them that my errors, though great, were involuntary—that an intoxicated man is the vilest of beasts—that it was not in my nature to be brutal to any one—that to be rude to a woman, when in my senses, was impossible with me—but—

. . . . . .

Regret! Remorse! Shame! ye three hell-hounds that ever dog my steps and bay at my heels, spare me! spare me!

Forgive the offences, and pity the perdition of, Madam, your humble slave.

No. CXCIV.

TO THE EARL OF GLENCAIRN.

MY LORD,

WHEN you cast your eye on the name at the bottom of this letter, and on the title page of the book I do myself the honour to send your lordship, a more pleasurable feeling than my vanity tells me, that it must be a name not entirely unknown to you. The generous patronage of your late illustrious brother found me in the lowest obscurity: he introduced my rustic muse to the partiality of my country; and to him I owe all. My sense of his goodness, and the anguish of my soul at losing my truly noble protector and friend, I have endeavoured to express in a poem to his memory, which I have now published. This edition is just from the press; and in my gratitude to the dead, and my respect for the living (fame belies you, my lord, if you possess not the same dignity of man, which was your noble brother's characteristic feature), I had destined a copy for the Earl of Glencairn. I learnt just now that you are in town:—allow me to present it to you.

I know, my lord, such is the vile, venal contagion which pervades the world of letters, that professions of respect from an author, particularly from a poet, to a lord, are more than suspicious. I claim my by-past conduct, and my feelings at this moment, as exceptions to the too just conclusion. Exalted as are the honours of your lordship's name, and unnoted as is the obscurity of mine; with the uprightness of an honest man, I come before your lordship, with an offering, however humble, 'tis all I have to give, of my grateful respect; and to beg of you, my lord,—'tis all I have to ask of you, that you will do me the honour to accept of it.

I have the honour to be, &c.*

No. CXCV.

TO DR. ANDERSON,

AUTHOR OF THE LIVES OF THE POETS.

SIR,

I AM much indebted to my worthy friend Dr. Blacklock for introducing me to a gentleman of Dr. Anderson's celebrity; but when you do me the honour to ask my assistance in your purposed publication, Alas, Sir! you might as well think to cheapen a little honesty at the sign of an Advocate's wig, or humility under the Geneva band. I am a miserable hurried devil, worn to the marrow in the friction of

* The original letter is in the possession of the Honourable Mrs. Holland of Poynings. From a memorandum on the back of the letter, it appears to have been written in May 1794.

holding the noses of the poor publicans to the grindstone of Excise; and like Milton's Satan, for private reasons, am forced

"To do what yet tho' dam'd I would abhore;"—

and except a couplet or two of honest execration
. . . . . .

No. CXCVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP

Castle Douglas, 5th June, 1794.

HERE in a solitary inn, in a solitary village, am I set by myself, to amuse my brooding fancy as I may.—Solitary confinement, you know, is Howard's favourite idea of reclaiming sinners; so let me consider by what fatality it happens that I have so long been exceeding sinful as to neglect the correspondence of the most valued friend I have on earth. To tell you that I have been in poor health, will not be excuse enough, though it is true. I am afraid I am about to suffer for the follies of my youth. My medical friends threaten me with a flying gout; but I trust they are mistaken.

I am just going to trouble your critical patience with the first sketch of a stanza I have been framing as I paced along the road. The subject is LIBERTY: You know, my honoured friend, how dear the theme is to me. I design it an irregular Ode for General Washington's birth-day. After having mentioned the degeneracy of other kingdoms, I come to Scotland thus:

(*See Poems, p.* 77.)

You will probably have another scrawl from me in a stage or two.

No. CXCVII.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND,

YOU should have heard from me long ago; but over and above some vexatious share in the pecuniary losses of these accursed times, I have all this winter been plagued with low spirits and blue devils, so that *I have almost hung my harp on the willow trees.*

I am just now busy correcting a new edition of my poems, and this, with my ordinary business, finds me in full employment.*

I send you by my friend Mr. Wallace forty-one songs for your fifth volume; if we cannot finish it any other way, what would you think of Scots words to some beautiful Irish airs? In the meantime, at your leisure, give a copy of the Museum to my worthy friend Mr. Peter Hill, bookseller, to bind for me, interleaved with blank leaves, exactly as he did the laird of Glenriddel's,* that I may insert every anecdote I can learn, together with my own criticisms and remarks on the songs.—A copy of this kind I shall leave with you, the editor, to publish at some after period, by way of making the Museum a book famous to the end of time, and you renowned for ever.

I have got an Highland dirk for which I have great veneration; as it once was the dirk of *Lord Balmerino.* It fell into bad hands, who stripped it of the silver mounting, as well as the knife and fork. I have some thoughts of sending it to your care, to get it mounted anew.

Thank you for the copies of my Volunteer Ballad.—Our friend Clarke has done *indeed* well! It is chaste and beautiful. I have not met with any thing that has pleased me so much. You know, I am no connoisseur; but that I am an amateur—will be allowed me.

No. CXCVIII.

TO PETER MILLER, JUN. ESQ.† OF DALSWINTON.

DEAR SIR, *Dumfries, Nov.* 1794.

YOUR offer is indeed truly generous, and most sincerely do I thank you for it; but in my present situation, I find that I dare not accept it. You well know my political sentiments; and were I an insular individual, unconnected with a wife and a family of children, with the most fervid enthusiasm I would have volunteered my services: I then could and would have despised all consequences that might have ensued.

My prospect in the Excise is something; at least, it is, encumbered as I am with the welfare, the very existence, of near half-a-score of helpless individuals, what I dare not sport with.

In the mean time, they are most welcome to

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* Burns's anxiety with regard to the correctness of his writings was very great. Being questioned as to his mode of composition, he replied, "All my poetry is the effect of easy composition, but of *laborious correction.*"

* This is the manuscript book containing the remarks on Scottish songs and ballads, presented to the public, with considerable additions, in this volume.

† In a conversation with his friend Mr. Perry, (the proprietor of "The Morning Chronicle"), Mr. Miller represented to that gentleman the insufficiency of Burns's salary to answer the imperious demands of a numerous family. In their sympathy for his misfortunes, and in their regret that his talents were nearly lost to the world of letters, these gentlemen agreed on the plan of settling him in London.

To accomplish this most desirable object, Mr. Perry, very spiritedly, made the poet a handsome offer of an annual stipend for the exercise of his talents in his newspaper. Burns's reasons for refusing this offer are stated in the present letter—CROMEK.

my Ode; only, let them insert it as a thing they have met with by accident and unknown to me.—Nay, if Mr. Perry, whose honour, after your character of him I cannot doubt; if he will give me an address and channel by which any thing will come safe from those spies with which he may be certain that his correspondence is beset, I will now and then send him any bagatelle that I may write. In the present hurry of Europe, nothing but news and politics will be regarded; but against the days of peace, which Heaven send soon, my little assistance may perhaps fill up an idle column of a Newspaper. I have long had it in my head to try my hand in the way of little prose essays, which I propose sending into the world through the medium of some Newspaper; and should these be worth his while, to these Mr. Perry shall be welcome; and all my reward shall be, his treating me with his paper, which, by the bye, to any body who has the least relish for wit, is a high treat indeed.

With the most grateful esteem, I am ever,
Dear Sir, &c.

No. CXCIX.

TO GAVIN HAMILTON, Esq.

MY DEAR SIR, *Dumfries.*

It is indeed with the highest satisfaction that I congratulate you on the return of "days of ease, and nights of pleasure," after the horrid hours of misery, in which I saw you suffering existence when I was last in Ayrshire. I seldom pray for any body. "I'm baith dead sweer, and wretched ill o't." But most fervently do I beseech the great Director of this world, that you may live long and be happy, but that you may live no longer than while you are happy. It is needless for me to advise you to have a reverend care of your health. I know you will make it a point never, at one time, to drink more than a pint of wine; (I mean an English pint), and that you will never be witness to more than one bowl of punch at a time; and that cold drams you will never more taste. I am well convinced too, that after drinking, perhaps boiling punch, you will never mount your horse and gallop home in a chill, late hour. —Above all things, as I understand you are now in habits of intimacy with that *Boanerges* of gospel powers, *Father Auld*, be earnest with him that he will wrestle in prayer for you, that you may see the vanity of vanities in trusting to, or even practising the carnal moral works of *charity, humanity, generosity*, and *forgiveness;* things which you practised so flagrantly that it was evident you delighted in them; neglecting, or perhaps, prophanely despising the *wholesome doctrine* of "Faith without works, the only anchor of salvation."

A hymn of thanksgiving would, in my opinion, be highly becoming from you at present; and in my zeal for your well-being, I earnestly press it on you to be diligent in chanting over the two enclosed pieces of sacred poesy. My best compliments to Mrs. Hamilton and Miss Kennedy.

Yours in the L——d
R. B.

No. CC.

TO MR. SAMUEL CLARKE, Jun. Dumfries.

DEAR SIR, *Sunday Morning.*

I was, I know, drunk last night, but I am sober this morning. From the expressions Capt. ——, made use of to me, had I had nobody's welfare to care for but my own, we should certainly have come, according to the manners of the world, to the necessity of murdering one another about the business. The words were such as, generally, I believe, end in a brace of pistols; but I am still pleased to think that I did not ruin the peace and welfare of a wife and a family of children in a drunken squabble. Farther you know that the report of certain political opinions being mine, has already once before brought me to the brink of destruction. I dread lest last night's business may be misrepresented in the same way.—You, I beg, will take care to prevent it. I tax your wish for Mrs. Burns's welfare with the task of waiting as soon as possible, on every gentleman who was present, and state this to him, and, as you please, shew him this letter. What, after all, was the obnoxious toast? "May our success in the present war be equal to the justice of our cause."—A toast that the most outrageous frenzy of loyalty cannot object to. I request and beg that this morning you will wait on the parties present at the foolish dispute. I shall only add, that I am truly sorry that a man who stood so high in my estimation as Mr. ——, should use me in the manner in which I conceive he has done.*

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* At this period of our Poet's life, when political animosity was made the ground of private quarrel, the following foolish verses were sent as an attack on Burns and his friends for their political opinions. They were written by some member of a club styling themselves the *Loyal Natives* of Dumfries, or rather by the united genius of that club, which was more distinguished for drunken loyalty, than either for respectability or poetical talent. The verses were handed over the table to Burns at a convivial meeting, and he instantly indorsed the subjoined reply.

The *Loyal Natives'* Verses.

Ye sons of sedition give ear to my song,
Let Syme, Burns, and Maxwell, pervade every throng,
With, Cracken the attorney, and Mundell the quack,
Send Willie the monger to hell with a smack.

No. CCI.

TO MR. ALEXANDER FINDLATER,

SUPERVISOR OF EXCISE, DUMFRIES.

SIR,

ENCLOSED are the two schemes. I would not have troubled you with the collector's one, but for suspicion lest it be not right. Mr. Erskine promised me to make it right, if you will have the goodnes to shew him how. As I have no copy of the scheme for myself, and the alterations being very considerable from what it was formerly, I hope that I shall have access to this scheme I send you, when I come to face up my new books. *So much for schemes.*—And that no scheme to betray a FRIEND, or mislead a STRANGER; to seduce a YOUNG GIRL, or rob a HENROOST; to subvert LIBERTY, or bribe an EXCISEMAN; to disturb the GENERAL ASSEMBLY, or annoy a GOSSIPPING; to overthrow the credit of ORTHODOXY, or the authority of OLD SONGS; to oppose *your wishes*, or frustrate *my hopes*—MAY PROSPER—is the sincere wish and prayer of

ROBT. BURNS.

No. CCII.

TO THE EDITORS OF THE MORNING CHRONICLE.*

GENTLEMEN, *Dumfries.*

YOU will see by your subscribers' list, that I have now been about nine months one of that number.

I am sorry to inform you, that in that time, seven or eight of your papers either have never been sent me, or else have never reached me. To be deprived of any one number of the first newspaper in Great Britain for information, ability and independence, is what I can ill brook and bear; but to be deprived of that most admirable oration of the Marquis of Lansdowne, when he made the great, though ineffectual attempt, (in the language of the poet, I fear too true,) "to save a SINKING STATE"—this was a loss which I neither can, nor will forgive you. —That paper, Gentlemen, never reached me; but I demand it of you. I am a BRITON; and must be interested in the cause of LIBERTY:—I am a MAN; and the RIGHTS of HUMAN NATURE cannot be indifferent to me. However, do not let me mislead you: I am not a man in that situation of life, which, as your subscriber, can be of any consequence to you, in the eyes of those to whom SITUATION OF LIFE ALONE is the criterion of MAN.—I am but a plain tradesman, in this distant, obscure country town: but that humble domicile in which I shelter my wife and children, is the CASTELLUM of a BRITON; and that scanty, hard-earned income which supports them, is as truly my property, as the most magnificent fortune, of the most PUISSANT MEMBER of your HOUSE of NOBLES.

These, Gentlemen, are my sentiments; and to them I subscribe my name: and were I a man of ability and consequence enough to address the PUBLIC, with that name should they appear.

I am, &c.

No. CCIII.

TO COL. W. DUNBAR.

I AM not gone to Elysium, most noble Colonel, but am still here in this sublunary world, serving my God by propagating his image, and honouring my king by begetting him loyal subjects. Many happy returns of the season await my friend! May the thorns of care never beset his path! May peace be an inmate of his bosom, and rapture a frequent visitor of his soul! May the blood-hounds of misfortune never trace his steps, nor the screech-owl of sorrow alarm his dwelling! May enjoyment tell thy hours, and pleasure number thy days, thou friend of the Bard! Blessed be he that blesseth thee, and cursed be he that curseth thee!

No. CCIV.

TO MISS FONTENELLE,

ACCOMPANYING A PROLOGUE TO BE SPOKEN FOR HER BENEFIT.

MADAM,

IN such a bad world as ours, those who add to the scanty sum of our pleasures, are posi-

---

Burns—extempore.

Ye true "Loyal Natives" attend to my song,
In uproar and riot rejoice the night long;
From *envy* and hatred your corps is exempt;
But where is your shield from the *darts of contempt*?

* This letter owes its origin to the following circumstance. A neighbour of the Poet's at Dumfries, called on him and complained that he was greatly disappointed in the irregular delivery of the Paper of *The Morning Chronicle*. Burns asked, "Why do not you write to the Editors of the Paper?" Good God, Sir, can *I* presume to write to the learned Editors of a Newspaper?—Well, if *you* are afraid of writing to the Editors of a Newspaper *I* am not; and if you think proper, I'll draw up a sketch of a letter, which you may copy.

Burns tore a leaf from his excise book and instantly produced the sketch which *I* have transcribed, and which is here printed. The poor man thanked him, and took the letter home. However, that caution which the watchfulness of his enemies had taught him to exercise, prompted him to the prudence of begging a friend to wait on the person for whom it was written, and request the favour to have it returned. This request was complied with, and the paper never appeared in print.

tively our benefactors. To you, Madam, on our humble Dumfries boards, I have been more indebted for entertainment than ever I was in prouder theatres. Your charms as a woman would insure applause to the most indifferent actress, and your theatrical talents would insure admiration to the plainest figure. This, Madam, is not the unmeaning, or insidious compliment of the frivolous or interested; I pay it from the same honest impulse that the sublime of nature excites my admiration, or her beauties give me delight.

Will the foregoing lines be of any service to you on your approaching benefit night? If they will, I shall be prouder of my muse than ever. They are nearly extempore: I know they have no great merit; but though they should add but little to the entertainment of the evening, they give me the happiness of an opportunity to declare how much I have the honour to be, &c.

ADDRESS.

Spoken by Miss Fontenelle *on her benefit-night, Dec.* 4, 1795, *at the Theatre, Dumfries.*

Still anxious to secure your partial favour,
And not less anxious, sure, this night than ever,
A Prologue, Epilogue, or some such matter,
'Twould vamp my bill, said I, if nothing better;
So, sought a Poet, roosted near the skies,
Told him, I came to feast my curious eyes;
Said, nothing like his works was ever printed;
And last, my prologue-business slily hinted.—
"Ma'am, let me tell you," quoth my man of rhymes:
"I know your bent—these are no laughing times:
Can you—but Miss, I own I have my fears,
Dissolve in pause—and sentimental tears—
With laden sighs, and solemn rounded sentence,
Rouse from his sluggish slumbers fell Repentance;
Paint Vengeance as he takes his horrid stand
Waving on high the desolating brand,
Calling the storms to bear him o'er a guilty land!"

I could no more—askance the creature eyeing,
D'ye think, said I, this face was made for crying?
I'll laugh, that's poz—nay, more, the world shall know it;
And so, your servant—gloomy Master Poet.

Firm as my creed, Sirs, 'tis my fix'd belief,
That Misery's another word for Grief:
I also think—so may I be a bride!
That so much laughter, so much life enjoy'd—

Thou man of crazy care and ceaseless sigh,
Still under bleak misfortune's blasting eye;
Doom'd to that sorest task of man alive—
To make three guineas do the work of five:
Laugh in Misfortune's face—the beldam witch!
Say, you'll be merry, though you can't be rich.

Thou other man of care, the wretch in love,
Who long with jiltish arts and airs hast strove;
Measur'st in desperate thought—a rope—thy neck—
Or, where the beetling cliff o'erhangs the deep,
Peerest to meditate the healing leap:
Would'st thou be cured, thou silly, moping elf,
Laugh at heir follies—laugh e'en at thyself:
Learn to despise those frowns now so terrific,
And love a kinder—that's your grand specific.—

To sum up all, be merry, I advise;
And as we're merry, may we still be wise.—
. . . . . .

No. CCV.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

My dear friend, 15*th December*, 1794.

As I am in a complete Decembrish humour, gloomy, sullen, stupid, as even the deity of Dulness herself should wish, I shall not drawl out a heavy letter with a number of heavier apologies, for my late silence. Only one I shall mention, because I know you will sympathize in it: these four months, a sweet little girl, my youngest child, has been so ill, that every day, a week or less threatened to terminate her existence. There had much need be many pleasures annexed to the states of husband and father, for God knows, they have many peculiar cares. I cannot describe to you the anxious, sleepless hours these ties frequently give me. I see a train of helpless little folks; me and my exertions all their stay; and on what a brittle thread does the life of man hang! If I am nipt off at the command of fate; even in all the vigour of manhood as I am, such things happen every day—gracious God! what would become of my little flock! 'Tis here that I envy your people of fortune.—A father on his death-bed, taking an everlasting leave of his children, has indeed woe enough; but the man of competent fortune leaves his sons and daughters independency and friends; while I—but I shall run distracted if I think any longer on the subject!

To leave talking of the matter so gravely, I shall sing with the old Scots ballad—

"O that I had ne'er been married,
I would never had nae care;
Now I've gotten wife and bairns,
They cry, crowdie, evermair.

Crowdie! ance; crowdie! twice;
Crowdie! three times in a day:
An ye crowdie ony mair,
Ye'll crowdie a' my meal away."—
. . . . . .

December 24th.

We have had a brilliant theatre here, this season; only, as all other business has, it experiences a stagnation of trade from the epidemical complaint of the country, *want of cash*. I mention our theatre merely to lug in an occasional *Address*, which I wrote for the benefit-night of one of the actresses, and which is as follows:—

(*See Address, p.* 384.)

25th, Christmas, Morning.

This, my much-loved friend, is a morning of wishes: accept mine—so Heaven hear me as they are sincere! that blessings may attend your steps, and affliction know you not! In the charming words of my favourite author, *The Man of Feeling*, "May the great spirit bear up the weight of thy grey hairs; and blunt the arrow that brings them rest!"

Now that I talk of authors, how do you like Cowper? is not the *Task* a glorious poem? The religion of the *Task*, bating a few scraps of Calvinistic divinity, is the religion of God and Nature: the religion that exalts, that ennobles man. Were not you to send me your *Zeluco* in return for mine? Tell me how you like my marks and notes through the book. I would not give a farthing for a book, unless I were at liberty to blot it with my criticisms.

I have lately collected, for a friend's perusal, all my letters; I mean those which I first sketched, in a rough draught, and afterwards wrote out fair. On looking over some old musty papers, which from time to time I had parcelled by, as trash that were scarce worth preserving, and which yet, at the same time, I did not care to destroy, I discovered many of those rude sketches, and have written, and am writing them out, in a bound MS. for my friend's library. As I wrote always to you the rhapsody of the moment, I cannot find a single scroll to you, except one, about the commencement of our acquaintance. If there were any possible conveyance, I would send you a perusal of my book.

No. CCVI.

TO MR. HERON, OF HERON.

SIR, 1794, *or* 1795.

I enclose you some copies of a couple of political ballads; one of which, I believe, you have never seen. Would to Heaven I could make you master of as many votes in the Stewartry. But—

"Who does the utmost that he can,
Does well, acts nobly, angels could no more."

In order to bring my humble efforts to bear with more effect on the foe, I have privately printed a good many copies of both ballads, and have sent them among friends all about the country.

To pillory on Parnassus the rank reprobation of character, the utter dereliction of all principle, in a profligate junto which has not only outraged virtue, but violated common decency, which, spurning even hypocrisy as paltry iniquity below their daring;—to unmask their flagitiousness to the broadest day—to deliver such over to their merited fate, is surely not merely innocent, but laudable; is not only propriety, but virtue.—You have already, as your auxiliary, the sober detestation of mankind on the heads of your opponents; and I swear by the lyre of Thalia to muster on your side all the votaries of honest laughter, and fair, candid ridicule!

I am extremely obliged to you for your kind mention of my interests in a letter which Mr. Syme shewed me. At present, my situation in life must be in a great measure stationary, at least for two or three years. The statement is this—I am on the supervisors' list, and as we come on there by precedency, in two or three years I shall be at the head of that list, and be appointed, *of course*. *Then* a friend might be of service to me in getting me into a place of the kingdom which I would like. A supervisor's income varies from about a hundred and twenty, to two hundred a year; but the business is an incessent drudgery, and would be nearly a complete bar to every species of literary pursuit. The moment I am appointed supervisor, in the common routine, I may be nominated on the collector's list; and this is always a business purely of political patronage. A collectorship varies much, from better than two hundred a year to near a thousand. They also come forward by precedency on the list; and have besides a handsome income, a life of complete leisure. A life of literary leisure with a decent competence, is the summit of my wishes. It would be the prudish affectation of silly pride in me to say that I do not need, or would not be indebted to a political friend; at the same time, Sir, I by no means lay my affairs before you thus, to hook my dependant situation on your benevolence. If, in my progress of life, an opening should occur where the good offices of a gentleman of your public character and political consequence might bring me forward, shall petition your goodness with the same frankness as I now do myself the honour to subscribe myself, &c*.

* Part of this letter appears in *Dr. Currie's ed.* vol. ii. p. 450.

No. CCVII.

ADDRESS OF THE SCOTS DISTILLERS,

TO

THE RIGHT HON. WILLIAM PITT.

SIR,

WHILE pursy burgesses crowd your gate, sweating under the weight of heavy addresses, permit us, the quondam distillers in that part of Great Britain called Scotland, to approach you, not with venal approbation, but with fraternal condolence; not as what you are just now, or for some time have been; but as what, in all probability, you will shortly be.—We shall have the merit of not deserting our friends in the day of their calamity, and you will have the satisfaction of perusing at least one honest address. You are well acquainted with the dissection of human nature; nor do you need the assistance of a fellow-creature's bosom to inform you, that man is always a selfish, often a perfidious being.—This assertion, however the hasty conclusions of superficial observation may doubt of it, or the raw inexperience of youth may deny it, those who make the fatal experiment we have done, will feel. You are a statesman, and consequently are not ignorant of the traffic of these corporation compliments.—The little great man who drives the borough to market, and the very great man who buys the borough in that market, they two do the whole business; and you well know, they, likewise, have their price. —With that sullen disdain which you can so well assume, rise, illustrious Sir, and spurn these hireling efforts of venal stupidity. At best they are the compliments of a man's friends on the morning of his execution: They take a decent farewell; resign you to your fate; and hurry away from your approaching hour.

If fame say true, and omens be not very much mistaken, you are about to make your exit from that world where the sun of gladness gilds the paths of prosperous men: permit us, great Sir, with the sympathy of fellow-feeling to hail your passage to the realms of ruin.

Whether the sentiment proceed from the selfishness or cowardice of mankind is immaterial; but to point out to a child of misfortune those who are still more unhappy, is to give him some degree of positive enjoyment. In this light, Sir, our downfal may be again useful to you:—Though not exactly in the same way, it is not perhaps the first time it has gratified your feelings. It is true, the triumph of your evil star is exceedingly despiteful.—At an age when others are the votaries of pleasure, or underlings in business, you had attained the highest wish of a British Statesman; and with the ordinary date of human life, what a prospect was before you! Deeply rooted in *Royal Favour*, you overshadowed the land. The birds of passage, which follow ministerial sunshine through every clime of political faith and manners, flocked to your branches; and the beasts of the field, (the lordly possessors of hills and vallies,) crowded under your shade. "But behold a watcher, a holy one came down from heaven, and cried aloud, and said thus: Hew down the tree, and cut off his branches; shake off his leaves, and scatter his fruit; let the beasts get away from under it, and the fowls from his branches!" A blow from an unthought-of quarter, one of those terrible accidents which peculiarly mark the hand of Omnipotence, overset your career, and laid all your fancied honours in the dust. But turn your eyes, Sir, to the tragic scenes of our fate.—An ancient nation that for many ages had gallantly maintained the unequal struggle for independence with her much more powerful neighbour, at last agrees to a union which should ever after make them one people. In consideration of certain circumstances, it was covenanted that the former should enjoy a stipulated alleviation in her share of the public burdens, particularly in that branch of the revenue called the Excise. This just privilege has of late given great umbrage to some interested, powerful individuals of the more potent part of the empire, and they have spared no wicked pains, under insidious pretexts, to subvert what they dared not openly to attack, from the dread which they yet entertained of the spirit of their ancient enemies.

In this conspiracy we fell; nor did we alone suffer, our country was deeply wounded. A number of (we will say) respectable individuals, largely engaged in trade, where we were not only useful but absolutely necessary to our country in her dearest interest; we, with all that was near and dear to us, were sacrificed without remorse, to the infernal deity of political expediency! We fell to gratify the wishes of dark envy, and the views of unprincipled ambition! Your foes, Sir, were avowed; were too brave to take an ungenerous advantage; *you* fell in the face of day.—On the contrary, our enemies, to complete our overthrow, contrived to make their guilt appear the villainy of a nation.—Your downfal only drags with you your private friends and partizans: In our misery are more or less involved the most numerous, and most valuable part of the community—all those who immediately depend on the cultivation of the soil, from the landlord of a province, down to the lowest hind.

Allow us, Sir, yet farther, just to hint at another rich vein of comfort in the dreary regions of adversity;—the gratulations of an approving conscience. In a certain great assembly, of which you are a distinguished member, panegyrics on your private virtues have so often wounded your delicacy, that we shall not distress you with any thing on the subject. There is, however, one part of your public conduct which our feelings will not permit us to pass in silence; our gratitude must trespass on your modesty; we mean, worthy Sir, your whole

behaviour to the Scots Distillers.—In evil hours, when obtrusive recollection presses bitterly on the sense, let that, Sir, come like a healing angel, and speak the peace to your soul which the world can neither give nor take away.

We have the honour to be,
Sir,
Your sympathizing fellow-sufferers,
And grateful humble Servants,
JOHN BARLEYCORN—Preses.

No. CCVIII.

TO THE HON. THE PROVOST, BAILIES, AND TOWN-COUNCIL OF DUMFRIES.

GENTLEMEN,

THE literary taste and liberal spirit of your good town has so ably filled the various departments of your schools, as to make it a very great object for a parent to have his children educated in them. Still, to me, a stranger, with my large family, and very stinted income, to give my young ones that education I wish, at the high school-fees which a stranger pays, will bear hard upon me.

Some years ago your good town did me the honour of making me an honorary burgess.—Will you allow me to request that this mark of distinction may extend so far, as to put me on the footing of a real freeman of the town, in the schools?

. . . . . .

If you are so very kind as to grant my request,* it will certainly be a constant incentive to me to strain every nerve where I can officially serve you; and will, if possible, increase that grateful respect with which I have the honour to be,

Gentlemen,
Your devoted humble Servant.

No. CCIX.

TO MRS. DUNLOP, IN LONDON.

Dumfries, 20th December, 1795.

I HAVE been prodigiously disappointed in this London journey of yours. In the first place, when your last to me reached Dumfries, I was in the country, and did not return until too late to answer your letter; in the next place, I thought you would certainly take this route; and now I know not what is become of you, or whether this may reach you at all. God grant that it may find you and yours in prospering health and good spirits. Do let me hear from you the soonest possible.

As I hope to get a frank from my friend Captain Miller, I shall, every leisure hour, take up the pen, and gossip away whatever comes first, prose or poesy, sermon or song. In this last article, I have abounded of late. I have often mentioned to you a superb publication of Scottish songs which is making its appearance in your great metropolis, and where I have the honour to preside over the Scottish verse, as no less a personage than Peter Pindar does over the English. I wrote the following for a favourite air.

. . . . . .

December 29.

SINCE I began this letter I have been appointed to act in the capacity of supervisor here, and I assure you, what with the load of business, and what with that business being new to me, I could scarcely have commanded ten minutes to have spoken to you, had you been in town, much less to have written you an epistle. This appointment is only temporary, and during the illness of the present incumbent; but I look forward to an early period when I shall be appointed in full form: a consummation devoutly to be wished! My political sins seem to be forgiven me.

. . . . . .

THIS is the season (New-year's-day is now my date) of wishing! and mine are most fervently offered up for you! May life to you be a positive blessing while it lasts, for your own sake; and that it may yet be greatly prolonged, is my wish for my own sake, and for the sake of the rest of your friends! What a transient business is life! Very lately I was a boy; but t'other day I was a young man; and I already begin to feel the rigid fibre and stiffening joints of old age coming fast o'er my frame. With all my follies of youth, and, I fear, a few vices of manhood, still I congratulate myself on having had, in early days, religion strongly impressed on my mind. I have nothing to say to any one as to which sect he belongs to, or what creed he believes; but I look on the man who is firmly persuaded of infinite wisdom and goodness, superintending and directing every circumstance that can happen in his lot—I felicitate such a man as having a solid foundation for his mental enjoyment; a firm prop and sure stay, in the hour of difficulty, trouble, and distress; and a never-failing anchor of hope, when he looks beyond the grave.

. . . . . .

January 12.

YOU will have seen our worthy and ingenious friend, the Doctor, long ere this. I hope

* This request was immediately complied with.

he is well, and beg to be remembered to him. I have just been reading over again, I dare say for the hundred and fiftieth time, his *View of Society and Manners;* and still I read it with delight. His humour is perfectly original—it is neither the humour of Addison, nor Swift, nor Sterne, nor of any body but Dr. Moore. By the bye, you have deprived me of *Zeluco;* remember that, when you are disposed to rake up the sins of my neglect from among the ashes of laziness.

He has paid me a pretty compliment, by quoting me in his last publication.*

. . . . . .

No. CCX.

TO MRS. RIDDEL.

20th January, 1796.

I CANNOT express my gratitude to you for allowing me a longer perusal of *Anacharsis*. In fact, I never met with a book that bewitched me so much; and I, as a member of the library, must warmly feel the obligation you have laid us under. Indeed to me the obligation is stronger than to any other individual of our society; as *Anacharsis* is an indispensable desideratum to a son of the muses.

The health you wished me in your morning's card, is, I think, flown from me for ever. I have not been able to leave my bed to-day till about an hour ago. These wickedly unlucky advertisements I lent (I did wrong) to a friend, and I am ill able to go in quest of him.

The muses have not quite forsaken me. The following detached stanzas I intend to interweave in some disastrous tale of a shepherd.

. . . . . .

No. CCXI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

31st January, 1796.

THESE many months you have been two packets in my debt—what sin of ignorance I have committed against so highly valued a friend, I am utterly at a loss to guess. Alas! Madam, ill can I afford, at this time, to be deprived of any of the small remnant of my pleasures. I have lately drunk deep of the cup of affliction. The autumn robbed me of my only daughter and darling child, and that at a distance too, and so rapidly, as to put it out of my power to pay the last the duties to her. I had scarcely begun to recover from that shock, when I became myself the victim of a most severe rheumatic fever, and long the die spun doubtful; until after many weeks of a sick-bed, it seems to have turned up life, and I am beginning to crawl across my room, and once indeed have been before my own door in the street.

When pleasure fascinates the mental sight,
Affliction purifies the visual ray,
Religion hails the drear, the untried night,
That shuts, for ever shuts! life's doubtful day.

CCXII.

TO MRS. RIDDEL,

WHO HAD DESIRED HIM TO GO TO THE BIRTH-DAY ASSEMBLY ON THAT DAY TO SHEW HIS LOYALTY.

4th June, 1796.

I AM in such miserable health as to be utterly incapable of showing my loyalty in any way. Racked as I am with rheumatisms, I meet every face with a greeting like that of Balak to Balaam—"Come curse me Jacob; and come defy me Israel!" So say I—Come curse me that east wind; and come, defy me the north! Would you have me, in such circumstances, to copy you out a love song?

. . . . . .

I may perhaps see you on Saturday, but I will not be at the ball.—Why should I? "man delights not me, nor woman either!" Can you supply me with the song, *Let us all be unhappy together?*—do if you can, and oblige *le pauvre miserable* R. B.

No. CCXIII.

TO MR. JAMES JOHNSON, EDINBURGH.

Dumfries, July 4, 1796.

How are you, my dear friend, and how comes on your fifth volume? You may probably think that for some time past I have neglected you and your work; but, alas! the hand of pain, and sorrow, and care, has these many months lain heavy on me! Personal and domestic affliction have almost entirely banished that alacrity and life with which I used to woo the rural muse of Scotia.

. . . . . .

You are a good, worthy, honest fellow, and have a good right to live in this world—because

* Edward.

you deserve it. Many a merry meeting this publication has given us, and possible it may give us more, though, alas! I fear it. This protracting, slow, consuming illness which hangs over me, will, I doubt much, my ever dear friend, arrest my sun before he has well reached his middle career, and will turn over the poet to far other and more important concerns than studying the brilliancy of wit, or the pathos of sentiment! However, *hope* is the cordial of the human heart, and I endeavour to cherish it as well as I can.

Let me hear from you as soon as convenient. —Your work is a great one; and now that it is near finished, I see, if we were to begin again, two or three things that might be mended; yet I will venture to prophecy, that to future ages your publication will be the text-book and standard of Scottish song and music.

I am ashamed to ask another favour of you, because you have been so very good already; but my wife has a very particular friend of hers, a young lady who sings well, to whom she wishes to present the *Scots Musical Museum.** If you have a spare copy, will you be so obliging as to send it by the very first *Fly*, as I am anxious to have it soon.

Yours ever,
ROBERT BURNS.

No. CCXIV.

TO MR. CUNNINGHAM.

Brow, Sea-bathing Quarters, 7th July, 1796.

MY DEAR CUNNINGHAM,

I RECEIVED yours here this moment, and am indeed highly flattered with the approbation of the literary circle you mention; a literary circle inferior to none in the two kingdoms. Alas! my friend, I fear the voice of the bard will soon be heard among you no more! for these eight or ten months I have been ailing, sometimes bed-fast and sometimes not; but these last three months I have been tortured with an excruciating rheumatism, which has reduced me to nearly the last stage. You actually would not know me if you saw me. Pale, emaciated, and so feeble, as occasionally to need help from my chair —my spirits fled! fled!—but I can no more on the subject—only the medical folks tell me that my last and only chance is bathing and country quarters, and riding. The deuce of the matter is this; when an exciseman is off duty, his salary is reduced to £35 instead of £50—What way, in the name of thrift, shall I maintain myself and keep a horse in country quarters—with a wife and five children at home, on £35? I mention this, because I had intended to beg your utmost interest, and that of all the friends you can muster, to move our Commissioners of Excise to grant me the full salary. I dare say you know them all personally. If they do not grant it me, I must lay my account with an exit truly *en poete*—if I die not of disease, I must perish with hunger.

I have sent you one of the songs; the other my memory does not serve me with, and I have no copy here; but I shall be at home soon, when I will send it you. Apropos to being at home, Mrs. Burns threatens in a week or two to add one more to my paternal charge, which, if of the right gender, I intend shall be introduced to the world by the respectable designation of *Alexander Cunningham Burns:* My last was *James Glencairn;* so you can have no objection to the company of nobility. Farewell.

No. CCXV.

TO MRS BURNS.

MY DEAREST LOVE, *Brow, Thursday.*

I DELAYED writing until I could tell you what effect sea-bathing was likely to produce. It would be injustice to deny that it has eased my pains, and I think has strengthened me; but my appetite is still extremely bad. No flesh nor fish can I swallow; porridge and milk are the only thing I can taste. I am very happy to hear, by Miss Jess Lewars, that you are well. My very best and kindest compliments to her and to all the children. I will see you on Sunday. Your affectionate husband, R. B.

CCXVI.

TO MRS. DUNLOP.

MADAM, 12*th July,* 1796.

I HAVE written you so often, without receiving any answer, that I would not trouble you again, but for the circumstances in which I am. An illness which has long hung about me, in all probability will speedily send me beyond that *bourne whence no traveller returns.* Your friendship, with which for many years you honoured me, was a friendship dearest to my soul. Your conversation, and especially your correspondence, were at once highly entertaining and instructive. With what pleasure did I use to break up the seal! The remembrance yet adds

* In this humble and delicate manner did poor Burns ask for a copy of a work of which he was principally the founder, and to which he had contributed, *gratuitously,* not less than 184 *original, altered, and collected songs!* The Editor has seen 180 transcribed by his own hand, for the *Museum.*

This letter was written on the 4th of July,—the poet died on the 21st. No other letters of this interesting period have been discovered, except one addressed to Mrs. Dunlop, of the 12th of July, which Dr. Currie very properly supposes to be the last production of the dying bard.—CROMEK.

one pulse more to my poor palpitating heart. Farewell ! ! ! .

R. B.

The above is supposed to be the last production of Robert Burns, who died on the 21st of the month, nine days afterwards. He had, however, the pleasure of receiving a satisfactory explanation of his friend's silence, and an assurance of the continuance of her friendship to his widow and children ; an assurance that has been amply fulfilled.

It is probable that the greater part of her letters to him were destroyed by our bard about the time that this last was written. He did not foresee that his own letters to her were to appear in print, nor conceive the disappointment that will be felt, that a few of this excellent lady's have not served to enrich and adorn the collection.

THE POET'S CORRESPONDENCE

WITH

MR. GEORGE THOMSON.

THE Poet, besides his ample contributions to the Musical Museum, published by Johnson, engaged in the somewhat similar, but far more extended undertaking of Mr. George Thomson, entitled *Select Melodies of Scotland*,—a Work more systematically planned, and scientifically executed, as to the Music—and more chastened in the composition and sentiment of the Songs, than any of its precursors; and which still maintains its superiority over all other collections as the National Repertory of Scottish Song, both as to the poetry and music. The following Correspondence shews the rise and progress, with much of the interesting details of our Poet's contributions to Mr. Thomson's Work:—

No. I.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET,

SOLICITING HIS CO-OPERATION.

SIR, *Edinburgh, September* 1792.

FOR some years past, I have, with a friend or two, employed many leisure hours in selecting and collating the most favourite of our national melodies for publication. We have engaged Pleyel, the most agreeable composer living, to put accompaniments to these, and also to compose an instrumental prelude and conclusion to each air, the better to fit them for concerts, both public and private. To render this work perfect, we are desirous to have the poetry improved, wherever it seems unworthy of the music; and that it is so in many instances, is allowed by every one conversant with our musical collections. The editors of these seem in general to have depended on the music proving an excuse for the verses; and hence, some charming melodies are united to mere nonsense and doggrel, while others are accommodated with rhymes so loose and indelicate, as cannot be sung in decent company. To remove this reproach, would be an easy task to the author of *The Cotter's Saturday Night*; and, for the honour of Caledonia, I would fain hope he may be induced to take up the pen. If so, we shall be enabled to present the public with a collection infinitely more interesting than any that has yet appeared, and acceptable to all persons of taste, whether they wish for correct melodies, delicate accompaniments, or characteristic verses.—We will esteem your poetical assistance a particular favour, besides paying any reasonable price you shall please to demand for it. Profit is quite a secondary consideration with us, and we are resolved to spare neither pains nor expense on the publication. Tell me frankly, then, whether you will devote your leisure to writing twenty or twenty-five songs, suited to the particular melodies which I am prepared to send you. A few songs, exceptionable only in some of their verses, I will likewise submit to your consideration; leaving it to you, either to mend these, or make new songs in their stead. It is superfluous to assure you that I have no intention to displace any of the sterling old songs; those only will be removed, which appear quite silly, or absolutely indecent. Even these shall all be examined by Mr. Burns, and if *he* is of opinion that any of them are deserving of the music, in such cases no divorce shall take place.

Relying on the letter accompanying this to be forgiven for the liberty I have taken in addressing you, I am, with great esteem, Sir, your most obedient humble servant,

G. THOMSON.

No. II.

THE POET'S ANSWER.

SIR, *Dumfries, 16th Sept.* 1792.

I HAVE just this moment got your letter. As the request you make to me will positively add

to my enjoyments in complying with it, I shall enter into your undertaking with all the small portion of abilities I have, strained to their utmost exertion by the impulse of enthusiasm. Only, don't hurry me: "Deil tak the hindmost" is by no means the *cri de guerre* of my muse. Will you, as I am inferior to none of you in enthusiastic attachment to the poetry and music of old Caledonia, and, since you request it, have cheerfully promised my mite of assistance—will you let me have a list of your airs, with the first line of the printed verses you intend for them, that I may have an opportunity of suggesting any alteration that may occur to me. You know 'tis in the way of my trade; still leaving you, gentlemen, the undoubted right of publishers, to approve, or reject, at your pleasure, for your own publication. Apropos! if you are for *English* verses, there is, on my part, an end of the matter. Whether in the simplicity of the ballad, or the pathos of the song, I can only hope to please myself in being allowed at least a sprinkling of our native tongue. English verses, particularly the works of Scotsmen, that have merit, are certainly very eligible. *Tweedside; Ah the poor shepherd's mournful fate! Ah Chloris, could I now but sit*, &c. you cannot mend: But such insipid stuff as, *To Fanny fair could I impart*, &c. usually set to *The Mill, Mill O*, is a disgrace to the collections in which it has already appeared, and would doubly disgrace a collection that will have the very superior merit of yours. But more of this in the farther prosecution of the business, if I am called on for my strictures and amendments—I say, amendments; for I will not alter except where I myself at least think that I amend.

As to any remuneration, you may think my songs either above or below price; for they shall absolutely be the one or the other. In the honest enthusiasm with which I embark in your undertaking, to talk of money, wages, fee, hire, &c. would be downright *prostitution of soul!* A proof of each of the songs that I compose or amend, I shall receive as a favour. In the rustic phrase of the season, "Gude speed the wark!"

I am, Sir, your very humble Servant,

R. BURNS.

P. S.—I have some particular reasons for wishing my interference to be known as little as possible.

No. III.

MR. THOMSON IN REPLY.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, 13th Oct.* 1792.

I RECEIVED, with much satisfaction, your pleasant and obliging letter, and I return my warmest acknowledgments for the enthusiasm with which you have entered into our undertaking. We have now no doubt of being able to produce a collection, highly deserving of public attention, in all respects.

I agree with you in thinking *English* verses, that have merit, very eligible, wherever new verses are necessary; because the English becomes every year, more and more, the language of Scotland; but, if you mean that no English verses, except those by Scottish authors, ought to be admitted, I am half inclined to differ from you. I should consider it unpardonable to sacrifice one good song in the Scottish dialect, to make room for English verses; but, if we can select a few excellent ones suited to the unprovided or ill-provided airs, would it not be the very bigotry of literary patriotism to reject such merely because the authors were born south of the Tweed? Our sweet air, *My Nannie O*, which in the collections is joined to the poorest stuff that Allan Ramsay ever wrote, beginning, *While some for pleasure pawn their health*, answers so finely to Dr. Percy's beautiful song, *O Nancy wilt thou go with me*, that one would think he wrote it on purpose for the air. However, it is not at all our wish to confine you to English verses: you shall freely be allowed a sprinkling of your native tongue, as you elegantly express it; and moreover, we will patiently wait your own time. One thing only I beg, which is, that however gay and sportive the muse may be, she may always be decent. Let her not write what beauty would blush to speak, nor wound that charming delicacy which forms the most precious dowry of our daughters. I do not conceive the song to be the most proper vehicle for witty and brilliant conceits: simplicity, I believe, should be its prominent feature; but, in some of our songs, the writers have confounded simplicity with coarseness and vulgarity; although, between the one and the other, as Dr. Beattie well observes, there is as great a difference as between a plain suit of clothes and a bundle of rags. The humorous ballad, or pathetic complaint, is best suited to our artless melodies; and more interesting indeed in all songs than the most pointed wit, dazzling descriptions, and flowery fancies.

With these trite observations, I send you eleven of the songs, for which it is my wish to substitute others of your writing. I shall soon transmit the rest, and, at the same time, a prospectus of the whole collection: and you may believe we will receive any hints that you are so kind as to give for improving the work, with the greatest pleasure and thankfulness.

I remain, Dear Sir, &c.

No. IV.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON,

WITH "THE LEA-RIG."

MY DEAR SIR,

LET me tell you that you are too fastidious in your ideas of songs and ballads. I own that your criticisms are just; the songs you specify in your list have *all but one* the faults you remark in them; but who shall mend the matter? Who shall rise up and say—Go to, I will make a better? For instance, on reading over *The Lea-rig*, I immediately set about trying my hand on it, and, after all, I could make nothing more of it than the following, which, Heaven knows, is poor enough:

(*See p.* 244.)

Your observation as to the aptitude of Dr. Percy's ballad to the air *Nannie O*, is just. It is besides, perhaps, the most beautiful ballad in the English language. But let me remark to you, that, in the sentiment and style of our Scottish airs, there is a pastoral simplicity, a something that one may call the Doric style and dialect of vocal music, to which a dash of our native tongue and manners is particularly, nay peculiarly, apposite. For this reason, and, upon my honour, for this reason alone, I am of opinion (but, as I told you before, my opinion is yours, freely yours, to approve, or reject, as you please), that my ballad of *Nannie O* might perhaps do for one set of verses to the tune. Now don't let it enter into your head, that you are under any necessity of taking my verses. I have long ago made up my mind as to my own reputation in the business of authorship; and have nothing to be pleased or offended at, in your adoption or rejection of my verses. Though you should reject one half of what I give you, I shall be pleased with your adopting the other half, and shall continue to serve you with the same assiduity.

In the printed copy of my *Nannie O*, the name of the river is horridly prosaic. I will alter it,

"Behind yon hills where *Lugar* flows."

Girvan is the name of the river that suits the idea of the stanza best, but Lugar is the most agreeable modulation of syllables.

I will soon give you a great many more remarks on this business; but I have just now an opportunity of conveying you this scrawl, free of postage, an expense that it is ill able to pay: so, with my best compliments to honest Allan, Good be wi' ye, &c.

Friday night.

. . . . . .

Saturday Morning.

As I find I have still an hour to spare this morning before my conveyance goes away, I will give you *Nannie O* at length.

(*See p.* 213.)

Your remarks on *Ewe-bughts*, *Marion*, are just: still it has obtained a place among our more classical Scottish songs; and what with many beauties in its composition, and more prejudices in its favour, you will not find it easy to supplant it.

In my very early years, when I was thinking of going to the West Indies, I took the following farewell of a dear girl. It is quite trifling, and has nothing of the merits of *Ewe-bughts*; but it will fill up this page. You must know, that all my earlier love-songs were the breathings of ardent passion, and though it might have been easy in after-times to have given them a polish, yet that polish, to me, whose they were, and who perhaps alone cared for them, would have defaced the legend of my heart, which was so faithfully inscribed on them. Their uncouth simplicity was, as they say of wines, their *race*.

(*Will ye go to the Indies, my Mary, p.* 243.)

Gala Water and *Auld Rob Morris*, I think, will most probably be the next subject of my musings. However, even on *my verses*, speak out your criticisms with equal frankness. My wish is, not to stand aloof, the uncomplying bigot of *opiniatrete*, but cordially to join issue with you in the furtherance of the work.

No. V.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

November 8th, 1792.

IF you mean, my dear Sir, that all the songs in your collection shall be poetry of the first merit, I am afraid you will find more difficulty in the undertaking than you are aware of. There is a peculiar rhythmus in many of our airs, and a necessity of adapting syllables to the emphasis, or what I would call the *feature-notes* of the tune, that cramp the poet, and lay him under almost insuperable difficulties. For instance, in the air, *My wife's a wanton wee thing*, if a few lines smooth and pretty can be adapted to it, it is all you can expect. The following were made extempore to it; and though, on farther study, I might give you something more profound, yet it might not suit the light-horse gallop of the air so well as this random clink.

(*My wife's a winsome wee thing. p.* 214.)

I have just been looking over the *Collier's*

bonny Dochter ; and if the following rhapsody, which I composed the other day, on a charming Ayrshire girl, Miss ——, as she passed through this place to England, will suit your taste better than the *Collier Lassie,* fall on and welcome.

(*O saw ye bonnie Lesslie, p.* 194.)

I have hitherto deferred the sublimer, more pathetic airs, until more leisure, as they will take, and deserve, a greater effort. However, they are all put into your hands, as clay into the hands of the potter, to make one vessel to honour, and another to dishonour. Farewell, &c.

No. VI.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

Ye banks, and braes, and streams around,
The castle o' Montgomery. (*See p.* 203.

MY DEAR SIR, *14th November,* 1792.

I AGREE with you that the song, *Katherine Ogie,* is very poor stuff, and unworthy, altogether unworthy, of so beautiful an air. I tried to mend it, but the awkward sound *Ogie* recurring so often in the rhyme, spoils every attempt at introducing sentiment into the piece. The foregoing song pleases myself ; I think it is in my happiest manner ; you will see at first glance that it suits the air. The subject of the song is one of the most interesting passages of my youthful days ; and, I own that I should be much flattered to see the verses set to an air which would insure celebrity. Perhaps, after all, 'tis the still glowing prejudice of my heart, that throws a borrowed lustre over the merits of the composition.

I have partly taken your idea of *Auld Rob Morris.* I have adopted the two first verses, and am going on with the song on a new plan, which promises pretty well. I take up one or another, just as the bee of the moment buzzes in my bonnet-lug ; and do you, *sans ceremonie,* make what use you choose of the productions. Adieu ! &c.

No. VII.

MR. THOMPSON TO THE POET.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, Nov.* 1792.

I WAS just going to write to you, that on meeting with your *Nannie* I had fallen violently in love with her. I thank you, therefore, for sending the charming rustic to me, in the dress you wish her to appear before the public. She does you great credit, and will soon be admitted into the best company.

I regret that your song for the *Lea-rig* is so short ; the air is easy, soon sung, and very pleasing ; so that, if the singer stops at the end of two stanzas, it is a pleasure lost ere it is well possessed.

Although a dash of our native tongue and manners is doubtless peculiarly congenial, and appropriate to our melodies, yet I shall be able to present a considerable number of the very Flowers of English Song, well adapted to those melodies, which in England at least will be the means of recommending them to still greater attention than they have procured there. But you will observe, my plan is, that every air shall in the first place have verses wholly by Scottish poets ; and that those of English writers shall follow as additional songs, for the choice of the singer.

What you say of the *Ewe-bughts* is just ; I admire it, and never meant to supplant it. All I requested was, that you would try your hand on some of the inferior stanzas, which are apparently no part of the original song ; but this I do not urge, because the song is of sufficient length though those inferior stanzas be omitted, as they will be by the singer of taste. You must not think I expect *all* the songs to be of superlative merit ; that were an unreasonable expectation. I am sensible that no poet can sit down doggedly to pen verses, and succeed well at all times.

I am highly pleased with your humorous and amorous rhapsody on *Bonnie Lesslie ;* it is a thousand times better than the *Collier's Lassie.* " The deil he cou'dna scaith thee," &c. is an eccentric and happy thought. Do you not think, however, that the names of such old heroes as Alexander, sound rather queer, unless in pompous or mere burlesque verse ? Instead of the line " And never made anither," I would humbly suggest, " And ne'er made sic anither ;" and I would fain have you substitute some other line for " Return to Caledonie," in the last verse, because I think this alteration of the orthography, and of the sound of Caledonia, disfigures the word, and renders it Hudibrastic.

Of the other song, *My wife's a winsome wee thing,* I think the first eight lines very good : but I do not admire the other eight, because four of them are a bare repetition of the first verse. I have been trying to spin a stanza, but could make nothing better than the following : do you mend it, or, as Yorick did with the love-letter, whip it up in your own way.

O leeze me on my wee thing,
My bonnie blythsome wee thing ;
Sae lang's I hae my wee thing,
I'll think my lot divine.
Tho' warld's care we share o't,
And may see meickle mair o't,
Wi' her I'll blythly bear it,
And ne'er a word repine.

. . . . . .

You perceive, my dear Sir, I avail myself of

the liberty which you condescend to allow me, by speaking freely what I think. Be assured, it is not my disposition to pick out the faults of any poem or picture I see: my first and chief object is to discover and be delighted with the beauties of the piece. If I sit down to examine critically, and at leisure, what perhaps you have written in haste, I may happen to observe careless lines, the re-perusal of which might lead you to improve them. The wren will often see what has been overlooked by the eagle.

I remain yours faithfully, &c.

P. S. Your verses upon Highland Mary, are just come to hand: they breathe the genuine spirit of poetry, and, like the music, will last for ever. Such verses united to such an air, with the delicate harmony of Pleyel superadded, might form a treat worthy of being presented to Apollo himself. I have heard the sad story of your Mary: you always seem inspired when you write of her.

No. VIII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

Dumfries, 1st December, 1792.

Your alterations of my *Nannie O* are perfectly right. So are those of "My wife's a wanton wee thing." Your alteration of the second stanza is a positive improvement. Now, my dear Sir, with the freedom which characterises our correspondence, I must not, cannot alter "Bonnie Lesslie." You are right, the word "Alexander" makes the line a little uncouth, but I think the thought is pretty. Of Alexander, beyond all other heroes, it may be said, in the sublime language of scripture, that "he went forth conquering and to conquer."

"For nature made her *what she is*,
And never made anither," (such a person as she is.)

This is in my opinion more poetical than "Ne'er made sic anither." However, it is immaterial: Make it either way. "Caledonie," I agree with you, is not so good a word as could be wished, though it is sanctioned in three or four instances by Allan Ramsay; but I cannot help it. In short, that species of stanza is the most difficult that I have ever tried.

The "Lea-rig" is as follows. (Here the poet gives the two first stanzas as before, p. 214, with the following in addition.)

The hunter loe's the morning sun,
To rouse the mountain deer, my jo;
At noon the fisher seeks the glen,
Along the burn to steer, my jo;
Gie me the hour o' gloamin grey,
It mak's my heart sae cheery, O
To meet thee on the lea-rig,
My ain kind dearie, O.

I am interrupted. Yours, &c.

No. IX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

(*Auld Rob Morris, p.* 192.)
(*Duncan Gray, p.* 199.)

4th December, 1792.

The foregoing I submit, my dear Sir, to your better judgment. Acquit them or condemn them as seemeth good in your sight. Duncan Gray is that kind of light-horse gallop of an air, which precludes sentiment. The ludicrous is its ruling feature.

No. X.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

(*Poortith Cauld, p.* 222.)
(*Galla Water, p.* 201.)

January 1793.

Many returns of the season to you, my dear Sir. How comes on your publication? will these two foregoing be of any service to you? I should like to know what songs you print to each tune, besides the verses to which it is set. In short, I would wish to give you my opinion on all the poetry you publish. You know it is my trade, and a man in the way of his trade may suggest useful hints, that escape men of much superior parts and endowments in other things.

If you meet with my dear and much valued C. greet him in my name, with the compliments of the season.

Yours, &c.

No. XI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET,

WITH A POSTSCRIPT FROM THE HON. A. ERSKINE.

Edinburgh, January 20th, 1793.

You make me happy, my dear Sir, and thousands will be happy to see the charmings songs you have sent me. Many merry returns of the season to you, and may you long continue among the sons and daughters of Caledonia, to delight them, and to honour yourself.

The four last songs with which you favoured me, viz. *Auld Rob Morris, Duncan Gray, Galla Water*, and *Cauld Kail*, are admirable. Duncan is indeed a lad of grace, and his humour will endear him to every body..

The distracted lover in *Auld Rob*, and the happy shepherdess in *Galla Water*, exhibit an excellent contrast; they speak from genuine feeling, and powerfully touch the heart.

The number of songs which I had originally in view was limited, but I now resolve to include every Scotch air and song worth singing, leaving none behind but mere gleanings, to which the publishers of *omnegatherum* are welcome. I would rather be the editor of a collection from which nothing could be taken away, than of one to which nothing could be added. We intend presenting the subscribers with two beautiful stroke engravings; the one characteristic of the plaintive, and the other of the lively songs; and I have Dr. Beattie's promise of an essay upon the subject of our national music, if his health will permit him to write it. As a number of our songs have doubtless been called forth by particular events, or by the charms of peerless damsels, there must be many curious anecdotes relating to them.

The late Mr. Tytler of Woodhouselee, I believe, knew more of this than any body, for he joined to the pursuits of an antiquary, a taste for poetry, besides being a man of the world, and possessing an enthusiasm for music beyond most of his contemporaries. He was quite pleased with this plan of mine, for I may say, it has been solely managed by me, and we had several long conversations about it, when it was in embryo. If I could simply mention the name of the heroine of each song, and the incident which occasioned the verses, it would be gratifying. Pray, will you send me any information of this sort, as well with regard to your own songs, as the old ones?

To all the favourite songs of the plaintive or pastoral kind, will be joined the delicate accompaniments, &c. of Pleyel. To those of the comic or humorous class, I think accompaniments scarcely necessary; they are chiefly fitted for the conviviality of the festive board, and a tuneful voice, with a proper delivery of the words, renders them perfect. Nevertheless, to these I propose adding bass accompaniments, because then they are fitted either for singing, or for instrumental performance, when there happens to be no singer. I mean to employ our right trusty friend Mr. Clarke to set the bass to these, which he assures me he will do, *con amore*, and with much greater attention than he ever bestowed on any thing of the kind. But for this last class of airs, I will not attempt to find more than one set of verses.

That eccentric bard Peter Pindar, has started I know not how many difficulties, about writing for the airs I sent to him, because of the peculiarity of their measure, and the trammels hey impose on his flying Pegasus. I subjoin for your perusal the only one I have yet got from him, being for the fine air "Lord Gregory." The Scots verses printed with that air, are taken from the middle of an old ballad, called, *The Lass of Lochroyan*, which I do not admire. I have set down the air therefore as a creditor of yours. Many of the Jacobite songs are replete with wit and humour; might not the best of these be included in our volume of comic songs?

. . . . . .

POSTSCRIPT,

FROM THE HON. A. ERSKINE.

Mr. Thomson has been so obliging as to give me a perusal of your songs. Highland Mary is most enchantingly pathetic, and Duncan Gray possesses native genuine humour: "spak o' lowpin o'er a linn," is a line of itself that should make you immortal. I sometimes hear of you from our mutual friend C., who is a most excellent fellow, and possesses, above all men I know, the charm of a most obliging disposition. You kindly promised me, about a year ago, a collection of your unpublished productions, religious and amorous; I know from experience how irksome it is to copy. If you will get any trusty person in Dumfries to write them over fair, I will give Peter Hill whatever money he asks for his trouble; and I certainly shall not betray your confidence.

I am your hearty admirer,
ANDREW ERSKINE.

No. XII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

26th January, 1793.

I approve greatly, my dear Sir, of your plans. Dr. Beattie's Essay will of itself be a treasure. On my part, I mean to draw up an appendix to the Doctor's Essay, containing my stock of anecdotes, &c. of our Scots songs. All the late Mr. Tytler's anecdotes I have by me, taken down in the course of my acquaintance with him from his own mouth. I am such an enthusiast, that in the course of my several peregrinations through Scotland, I made a pilgrimage to the individual spot from which every song took its rise, "Lochaber," and the "Braes of Ballenden," excepted. So far as the locality, either from the title of the air, or the tenor of the song, could be ascertained, I have paid my devotions at the particular shrine of every Scotch muse.

I do not doubt but you might make a very valuable collection of Jacobite songs—but would

it give no offence? In the mean time, do not you think that some of them, particularly "The Sow's tail to Geordie," as an air, with other words, might be well worth a place in your collection of lively songs?

If it were possible to procure songs of merit, it would be proper to have one set of Scots words to every air, and that the set of words to which the notes ought to be set. There is a *naivete*, a pastoral simplicity, in a slight intermixture of Scots words and phraseology, which is more in unison (at least to my taste, and I will add, to every genuine Caledonian taste), with the simple pathos, or rustic sprightliness of our native music, than any English verses whatever.

The very name of Peter Pindar, is an acquisition to your work. His "Gregory" is beautiful. I have tried to give you a set of stanzas in Scots, on the same subject, which are at your service. Not that I intend to enter the lists with Peter; that would be presumption indeed. My song, though much inferior in poetic merit, has I think more of the ballad simplicity in it.

. . . . . .

(*Lord Gregory*,* *p.* 209.)

My most respectful compliments to the honourable gentleman who favoured me with a postscript in your last. He shall hear from me and receive his MSS. soon.

No. XIII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

(*Mary Morison*, *p.* 211.)

MY DEAR SIR, 20*th March*, 1793.

THE song prefixed is one of my juvenile works. I leave it in your hands. I do not think it very remarkable, either for its merits, or demerits. It is impossible (at least I feel it so in my stinted powers), to be always original, entertaining, and witty.

What is become of the list, &c. of your songs? I shall be out of all temper with you by and by. I have always looked on myself as the prince of indolent correspondents, and valued myself accordingly; and I will not, cannot bear rivalship from you, nor any body else.

No. XIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

(*Wandering Willie*, *p.* 240.)

March, 1793.

I leave it to you, my dear Sir, to determine whether the above, or the old "Through the lang Muir," be the best.

No. XV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

(*Open the Door to Me, O*, *p.* 219.)

I do not know whether this song be really mended.

No. XVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

(*True-hearted was he*, *p.* 240.)

No. XVII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

Edinburgh, 2*d April*, 1793.

I WILL not recognise the title you give yourself, "the prince of *indolent* correspondents;" but if the adjective were taken away, I think the title would then fit you exactly. It gives me pleasure to find you can furnish anecdotes with respect to most of the songs: these will be a literary curiosity.

I now send you my list of the songs, which I believe will be found nearly complete. I have put down the first lines of all the English songs, which I propose giving in addition to the Scotch verses. If any others occur to you, better adapted to the character of the airs, pray mention

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* The song of Dr. Walcott on the same subject is as follows:—

AH ope, Lord Gregory, thy door,
A midnight wanderer sighs;
Hard rush the rains, the tempests roar,
And lightnings cleave the skies.

Who comes with woe at this drear night—
A pilgrim of the gloom?
If she whose love did once delight,
My cot shall yield her room.

Alas! thou heard'st a pilgrim mourn,
That once was priz'd by thee:
Think of the ring by yonder burn
Thou gav'st to love and me.

But should'st thou not poor Marian know,
I'll turn my feet and part;
And think the storms that round me blow,
Far kinder than thy heart.

It is but doing justice to Dr. Walcott to mention, that his song is the original. Mr. Burns saw it, liked it, and immediately wrote the other on the same subject, which is derived from an old Scottish ballad of uncertain origin.

them, when you favour me with your strictures upon every thing else relating to the work.

Pleyel has lately sent me a number of the songs, with his symphonies and accompaniments added to them. I wish you were here, that I might serve up some of them to you with your own verses, by way of dessert after dinner. There is so much delightful fancy in the symphonies, and such a delicate simplicity in the accompaniments: they are indeed beyond all praise.

I am very much pleased with the several last productions of your muse: your Lord Gregory, in my estimation, is more interesting than Peter's, beautiful as his is! Your *Here Awa Willie* must undergo some alterations to suit the air. Mr. Erskine and I have been conning it over: he will suggest what is necessary to make them a fit match.*

The gentleman I have mentioned, whose fine taste you are no stranger to, is so well pleased both with the musical and poetical part of our work, that he has volunteered his assistance, and has already written four songs for it, which, by his own desire, I send for your perusal.

No. XVIII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

(*The Soldier's Return, p.* 235.)
(*Meg o' the Mill. p.* 211.)

No. XIX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

7th April, 1793.

Thank you, my dear Sir, for your packet. You cannot imagine how much this business of composing for your publication has added to my enjoyments. What with my early attachment to ballads, your book, &c. ballad-making is now as completely my hobby-horse, as ever fortification was Uncle Toby's; so I'll e'en canter it away till I come to the limit of my race, (God grant that I may take the right side of the winning-post!) and then cheerfully looking back on the honest folks with whom I have been happy, I shall say, or sing, "Sae merry as we a' hae been!" and raising my last looks to the whole human race, the last words of the voice of *Coila* shall be "Good night and joy be wi' you a'!" So much for my last words: now for a few present remarks, as they have occurred at random, on looking over your list.

The first lines of *The last time I came o'er the moor*, and several other lines in it, are beautiful: but in my opinion—pardon me, revered shade of Ramsay! the song is unworthy of the divine air. I shall try to *make*, or *mend*. *For ever, Fortune wilt thou prove*, is a charming song; but *Logan burn and Logan braes*, are sweetly susceptible of rural imagery: I'll try that likewise, and if I succeed, the other song may class among the English ones. I remember the two last last lines of a verse in some of the old songs of *Logan water*, (for I know a good many different ones) which I think pretty:

"Now my dear lad maun face his faes,
Far, far frae me and Logan braes."

My Patie is a lover gay, is unequal. "His mind is never muddy," is a muddy expression indeed.

"Then I'll resign and marry Pate,
And syne my cockernony."

This is surely far unworthy of Ramsay, or your book. My song, *Rigs of barley*, to the same tune, does not altogether please me; but if I can mend it, and thrash a few loose sentiments out of it, I will submit it to your consideration. *The lass o' Patie's mill* is one of Ramsay's best songs; but there is one loose sentiment in it, which my much-valued friend, Mr. Erskine, will take into his critical consideration. In Sir J. Sinclair's Statistical volumes are two claims, one, I think, from Aberdeenshire, and the other from Ayrshire, for the honour of this song. The following anecdote, which I had from the present Sir William Cunningham, of Robertland, who had it of the late John Earl of Loudon, I can on such authorities believe.

Allan Ramsay was residing at Loudon Castle with the then Earl, father to Earl John; and one forenoon, riding, or walking out together, his Lordship and Allan passed a sweet romantic spot on Irvine water, still called "Patie's Mill," where a bonnie lass was "tedding hay, bareheaded on the green." My Lord observed to Allan, that it would be a fine theme for a song. Ramsay took the hint, and lingering behind, he composed the first sketch of it, which he produced at dinner.

One day I heard Mary say, Is a fine song; but for consistency's sake alter the name "Adonis." Was there ever such banns published, as a purpose of marriage between *Adonis* and *Mary?* I agree with you that my song, *There's nought but care on every hand*, is much superior to *Poortith cauld*. The original song, *The mill, mill O*, though excellent, is, on account of delicacy, inadmissible; still I like the title, and think a Scottish song would suit the notes best; and let your chosen song, which is very pretty, follow, as an English set. *The banks of the Dee* is, you know, literally *Langolee* to slow time. The song is well enough, but has some false imagery in it: for instance,

* The gentleman alluded to was Mr. Andrew Erskine. The poet adopted part of the alterations, and rejected the rest.

"And sweetly the nightingale sung from the *tree.*"

In the first place, the nightingale sings in a low bush, but never from a tree; and in the second place, there never was a nightingale seen or heard on the banks of the Dee, or on the banks of any other river in Scotland. Exotic rural imagery is always comparatively flat. If I could hit on another stanza equal to *The small birds rejoice*, &c. I do myself honestly avow that I think it a superior song. *John Anderson my jo*—the song to this tune in Johnson's Museum, is my composition, and I think it not my worst: If it suit you, take it and welcome. Your collection of sentimental and pathetic songs, is, in my opinion, very complete; but not so your comic ones. Where are *Tullochgorum*, *Lumps o' pudding*, *Tibbie Fowler*, and several others, which, in my humble judgment, are well worthy of preservation? There is also one sentimental song of mine in the Museum, which never was known out of the immediate neighbourhood, until I got it taken down from a country girl's singing. It is called *Craigieburn wood;* and in the opinion of Mr. Clarke, is one of our sweetest Scottish songs. He is quite an enthusiast about it; and I would take his taste in Scottish music against the taste of most connoisseurs.

You are quite right in inserting the last five in your list, though they are certainly Irish. *Shepherds I have lost my love*, is to me a heavenly air—what would you think of a set of Scottish verses to it? I have made one to it a good while ago, which I think . . . . . but in its original state is not quite a lady's song. I enclose an altered, not amended copy for you, if you choose to set the tune to it, and let the Irish verses follow.

Mr. Erskine's songs are all pretty, but his *Lone vale* is divine. Yours, &c.

Let me know just how you like these random hints.

No. XX.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

Edinburgh, April, 1793.

I REJOICE to find, my dear Sir, that ballad-making continues to be your hobby-horse. Great pity 'twould be were it otherwise. I hope you will amble it away for many a year, and "witch the world with your horsemanship."

I know there are a good many *lively* songs of merit that I have not put down in the list sent you; but I have them all in my eye. *My Patie is a lover gay*, though a little unequal, is natural and very pleasing song, and I humbly think we ought not to displace or alter it, except the last stanza.*

No. XXI.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

April, 1793.

I HAVE yours, my dear Sir, this moment. I shall answer it and your former letter, in my desultory way of saying whatever comes uppermost.

The business of many of our tunes wanting at the beginning what fiddlers call a starting-note, is often a rub to us poor rhymers.

"There's braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
That wander thro' the blooming heather,"

You may alter to

"Braw, braw lads on Yarrow braes,
Ye wander," &c.

My song, *Here awa, there awa*, as amended by Mr. Erskine, I entirely approve of, and return you.

Give me leave to criticise your taste in the only thing in which it is in my opinion reprehensible. You know I ought to know something of my own trade. Of pathos, sentiment, and point, you are a complete judge; but there is a quality more necessary than either, in a song, and which is the very essence of a ballad, I mean simplicity: now, if I mistake not, this last feature you are a little apt to sacrifice to the foregoing.

Ramsay, as every other poet, has not been always equally happy in his pieces: still I cannot approve of taking such liberties with an author as Mr. W. proposes doing with *The last time I came o'er the Moor*. Let a poet, if he chooses, take up the idea of another, and work it into a piece of his own; but to mangle the works of the poor bard, whose tuneful tongue is now mute for ever, in the dark and narrow house—by Heaven 'twould be sacrilege! I grant that Mr. W's version is an improvement; but I know Mr. W. well, and esteem him much; let him mend the song, as the Highlander mended his gun:—he gave it a new stock, and a new lock, and a new barrel.

I do not, by this, object to leaving out improper stanzas, where that can be done without spoiling the whole. One stanza in *The lass o' Patie's mill*, must be left out: the song will be nothing worse for it. I am not sure if we

* The original letter from Mr. Thomson contains many observations on the Scottish songs, and on the manner of adapting the words to the music, which, at his desire, are suppressed. The subsequent letter of Mr. Burns refers to several of these observations.

can take the same liberty with *Corn rigs are bonnie*. Perhaps it might want the last stanza, and be the better for it. *Cauld kail in Aberdeen*, you must leave with me yet a while. I have vowed to have a song to that air, on the lady whom I attempted to celebrate in the verses, *Poortith cauld and restless love*. At any rate, my other song, *Green grow the rashes*, will never suit. That song is current in Scotland under the old title, and to the merry old tune of that name; which of course would mar the progress of your song to celebrity. Your book will be the standard of Scots songs for the future: let this idea ever keep your judgment on the alarm.

I send a song, on a celebrated toast in this country, to suit *Bonnie Dundee*. I send you also a ballad to the *Mill, mill O*.

The last time I came o'er the moor, I would fain attempt to make a Scots song for, and let Ramsay's be the English set. You shall hear from me soon. When you go to London on this business, can you come by Dumfries? I have still several MS. Scots airs by me which I have picked up, mostly from the singing of country lasses. They please me vastly; but your learned *lugs* would perhaps be displeased with the very feature for which I like them. I call them simple; you would pronounce them silly. Do you know a fine air called *Jackie Hume's lament*? I have a song of considerable merit to that air. I'll enclose you both the song and tune, as I had them ready to send to Johnson's Museum. I send you likewise, to me, a beautiful little air, which I had taken down from *viva voce*.

Adieu!

No. XXII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR, *April*, 1793.

I HAD scarcely put my last letter into the post-office, when I took up the subject of *The last time I came o'er the moor*, and ere I slept drew the outlines of the foregoing. How far I have succeeded, I leave on this, as on every other occasion, to you to decide. I own my vanity is flattered, when you give my songs a place in your elegant and superb work; but to be of service to the work is my first wish. As I have often told you, I do not in a single instance wish you, out of compliment to me, to insert any thing of mine. One hint let me give you—whatever Mr. Pleyel does, let him not alter one *iota* of the original Scottish airs; I mean, in the song department; but let our national music preserve its native features. They are, I own, frequently wild and irreducible to the more modern rules; but on that very eccentricity, perhaps, depends a great part of their effect.

No. XXIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

Edinburgh, 26th April, 1793.

I HEARTILY thank you, my dear Sir, for your last two letters, and the songs which accompanied them. I am always both instructed and entertained by your observations; and the frankness with which you speak out your mind, is to me highly agreeable. It is very possible I may not have the true idea of simplicity in composition. I confess there are several songs of Allan Ramsay's, for example, that I think silly enough, which another person, more conversant than I have been with country people, would perhaps call simple and natural. But the lowest scenes of simple nature will not please generally, if copied precisely as they are. The poet, like the painter, must select what will form an agreeable as well as a natural picture. On this subject it were easy to enlarge; but at present suffice it to say, that I consider simplicity, rightly understood, as a most essential quality in composition, and the ground-work of beauty in all the arts. I will gladly appropriate your most interesting new ballad, *When wild war's deadly blast*, &c. to the *Mill, mill, O*, as well as the two other songs to their respective airs; but the third and fourth line of the first verse must undergo some little alteration in order to suit the music. Pleyel does not alter a single note of the songs. That would be absurd indeed! With the airs which he introduces into the sonatas, I allow him to take such liberties as he pleases; but that has nothing to do with the songs.

. . . . . .

P. S.—I wish you would do as you proposed with your *Rigs o' barley*. If the loose sentiments are *thrashed* out of it, I will find an air for it; but as to this there is no hurry.

No. XXIV.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

June, 1793.

WHEN I tell you, my dear Sir, that a friend of mine, in whom I am much interested, has fallen a sacrifice to these accursed times, you will easily allow that it might unhinge me for doing any good among ballads. My own loss, as to pecuniary matters, is trifling; but the total ruin of a much-loved friend, is a loss indeed. Pardon my seeming inattention to your last commands.

I cannot alter the disputed lines in the *Mill, mill, O*. What you think a defect I esteem as a positive beauty: so you see how doctors differ. I shall now, with as much alacrity as I can muster, go on with your commands.

You know Fraser, the hautboy player in Edinburgh—he is here instructing a band of music for a fencible corps quartered in this country. Among many of his airs that please me, there is one well known as a reel by the name of *The Quaker's Wife;* and which I remember a grand aunt of mine used to sing, by the name of *Liggeram cosh, my bonny wee lass.* Mr. Fraser plays it slow, and with an expression that quite charms me. I became such an enthusiast about it, that I made a song for it, which I here subjoin; and enclose Fraser's set of the tune. If they hit your fancy, they are at your service; if not, return me the tune, and I will put it in Johnson's Museum. I think the song is not in my worst manner.

(*Blythe hae I been on yon Hill, p.* 193.)

I should wish to hear how this pleases you.

No. XXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

25th June, 1793.

Have you ever, my dear Sir, felt your bosom ready to burst with indignation on reading of those mighty villains who divide kingdom against kingdom, desolate provinces, and lay nations waste out of the wantonness of ambition, or often from still more ignoble passions? In a mood of this kind to-day, I recollected the air of *Logan water;* and it occurred to me that its querulous melody probably had its origin from the plaintive indignation of some swelling, suffering heart, fired at the tyrannic strides of some public destroyer; and overwhelmed with private distress, the consequence of a country's ruin. If I have done any thing at all like justice to my feelings, the following song, composed in three quarters of an hour's meditation in my elbow chair, ought to have some merit.

(*Logan Braes, p.* 209.)

Do you know the following beautiful little fragment in Witherspoon's Collection of Scots Songs?

Tune—"Hughie Graham."

"O gin my love were yon red rose
"That grows upon the castle wa',
"And I mysel' a drap o' dew,
"Into her bonnie breast to fa'!

"Oh, there beyond expression blest,
"I'd feast on beauty a' the night;
"Seal'd on her silk-saft faulds to rest,
"Till fley'd awa by Phœbus' light."

This thought is inexpressibly beautiful; and quite, so far as I know, original. It is too short for a song, else I would forswear you altogether, unless you gave it a place. I have often tried to eke a stanza to it, but in vain. After balancing myself for a musing five minutes on the hind-legs of my elbow chair, I produced the following.

The verses are far inferior to the foregoing, I frankly confess; but if worthy of insertion at all, they might be first in place; as every poet, who knows any thing of his trade, will husband his best thoughts for a concluding stroke.

O were my love yon lilac fair,
Wi' purple blossoms to the spring;
And I a bird to shelter there,
When wearied on my little wing:

How I wad mourn, when it was torn
By autumn wild, and winter rude!
But I wad sing on wanton wing,
When youthfu' May its bloom renew'd.

No. XXVI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

Monday, 1st July, 1793.

I am extremely sorry, my good Sir, that any thing should happen to unhinge you. The times are terribly out of tune, and when harmony will be restored, heaven knows.

The first book of songs, just published, will be despatched to you along with this. Let me be favoured with your opinion of it frankly and freely.

I shall certainly give a place to the song you have written for the *Quaker's wife;* it is quite enchanting. Pray, will you return the list of songs, with such airs added to it as you think ought to be included. The business now rests entirely on myself, the gentleman who originally agreed to join the speculation having requested to be off. No matter; a loser I cannot be. The superior excellence of the work will create a general demand for it, as soon as it is properly known. And were the sale even slower than it promises to be, I should be somewhat compensated for my labour, by the pleasure I shall receive from the music. I cannot express how much I am obliged to you for the exquisite new songs you are sending me; but thanks, my friend, are a poor return for what you have done: as I shall be benefited by the publication, you must suffer me to enclose a small mark of my gratitude*, and to repeat it afterwards when I find it convenient. Do not return it, for, by heaven, if you do, our correspondence is at an end: and though this would be no loss to you, it would mar the publication,

* L.5.

which, under your auspices, cannot fail to be respectable and interesting.

. . . . . .

Wednesday Morning.

I thank you for your delicate additional verses to the old fragment, and for your excellent song to Logan water: Thomson's truly elegant one will follow for the English singer. Your apostrophe to statesmen is admirable, but I am not sure if it is quite suitable to the supposed gentle character of the fair mourner who speaks it.

No. XXVII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR, *July* 2, 1793.

I HAVE just finished the following ballad, and as I do think it in my best style, I send it you. Mr. Clarke, who wrote down the air from Mrs. Burns' *wood-note wild*, is very fond of it; and has given it a celebrity by teaching it to some young ladies of the first fashion here. If you do not like the air enough to give it a place in your collection, please return it. The song you may keep, as I remember it.

. . . . . .

(*Bonnie Jean, p.* 194.)

I have some thoughts of inserting in your index, or in my notes, the names of the fair ones, the themes of my songs. I do not mean the name at full; but dashes or asterisms, so as ingenuity may find them out.

The heroine of the foregoing is Miss M. daughter to Mr. M. of D., one of your subscribers. I have not painted her in the rank which she holds in life, but in the dress and character of a cottager.

No. XXVIII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

July, 1793.

I ASSURE you, my dear Sir, that you truly hurt me with your pecuniary parcel. It degrades me in my own eyes. However, to return it would savour of affectation; but as to any more traffic of that debtor and creditor kind, I swear by that HONOUR which crowns the upright statue of ROBERT BURNS' INTEGRITY—on the least motion of it, I will indignantly spurn the by-past transaction, and from that moment commence entire stranger to you! BURNS' character for generosity of sentiment and independence of mind will, I trust, long outlive any of his wants, which the cold unfeeling ore can supply: at least, I will take care that such a character he shall deserve.

Thank you for my copy of your publication. Never did my eyes behold, in any musical work, such elegance and correctness. Your preface, too, is admirably written; only, your partiality to me has made you say too much; however, it will bind me down to double every effort in the future progress of the work. The following are a few remarks on the songs in the list you sent me. I never copy what I write to you, so I may be often tautological, or perhaps contradictory.

The flowers of the forest is charming as a poem; and should be, and must be, set to the notes; but, though out of your rule, the three stanzas, beginning,

" I hae seen the smiling o' fortune beguiling,"

are worthy of a place, were it but to immortalize the author of them, who is an old lady of my acquaintance, and at this moment living in Edinburgh. She is a Mrs. Cockburn: I forget of what place; but from Roxburghshire. What a charming apostrophe is

" O fickle fortune, why this cruel sporting,
Why, why torment us—*poor sons of a day!*"

The old ballad, *I wish I were where Helen lies*, is silly, to contemptibility*. My alteration of it, in Johnson's, is not much better. Mr. Pinkerton, in his, what he calls, Ancient Ballads (many of them notorious, though beautiful enough forgeries) has the best set. It is full of his own interpolations—but no matter.

In my next, I will suggest to your consideration, a few songs which may have escaped your hurried notice. In the meantime, allow me to congratulate you now, as a brother of the quill. You have *committed* your character and fame; which will now be tried, for ages to come, by the illustrious jury of the SONS and DAUGHTERS of TASTE—all whom poesy can please, or music charm.

Being a bard of nature, I have some pretensions to second sight; and I am warranted by the spirit to foretel and affirm, that your great-grandchild will hold up your volumes, and say, with honest pride, " This so much admired selection was the work of my ancestor."

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* There is a copy of this ballad given in the account of the parish of Kirkpatrick-Fleming, (which contains the tomb of Fair Helen Irvine,) in the statistics of Sir John Sinclair, Vol. XIII. p. 275, to which this character is certainly not applicable.

No. XXIX.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, 1st August,* 1793.

I HAD the pleasure of receiving your last two letters, and am happy to find you are quite pleased with the appearance of the first book. When you come to hear the songs sung and accompanied, you will be charmed with them.

The bonnie bucket Lassie, certainly deserves better verses, and I hope you will match her. *Cauld kail in Aberdeen, Let me in this ae night,* and several of the livelier airs, wait the muse's leisure: these are peculiarly worthy of her choice gifts: besides, you'll notice that in airs of this sort, the singer can always do greater justice to the poet, than in the slower airs of *The Bush aboon Traquair, Lord Gregory,* and the like; for in the manner the latter are frequently sung, you must be contented with the sound, without the sense. Indeed both the airs and words are disguised by the very slow, languid, psalm-singing style in which they are too often performed: they lose animation and expression altogether, and instead of speaking to the mind, or touching the heart, they cloy upon the ear, and set us a yawning!

Your ballad, *There was a lass and she was fair,* is simple and beautiful, and shall undoubtedly grace my collection.

No. XXX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

MY DEAR THOMSON, *August,* 1793.

I HOLD the pen for our friend Clarke, who at present is studying the music of the spheres at my elbow. The *Georgium Sidus* he thinks is rather out of tune; so until he rectify that matter, he cannot stoop to terrestrial affairs.

He sends you six of the Rondeau subjects, and if more are wanted, he says you shall have hem.

. . . . . .

Confound your long stairs!

S. CLARKE.

No. XXXI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

August, 1793.

YOUR objection, my dear sir, to the passages in my song of *Logan Water,* is right in one instance; but it is difficult to mend it: If I can, I will. The other passage you object to does not appear in the same light to me.

I have tried my hand on *Robin Adair,* and you will probably think, with little success; but it is such a cursed, cramp, out of the way measure, that I despair of doing any thing better to it.

. . . . . .

(*Phillis the fair, p.* 222.)

So much for namby-pamby. I may, after all, try my hand on it in Scots verse. There I always find myself most at home.

I have just put the last hand to the song I meant for *Cauld Kail in Aberdeen.* If it suits you to insert it, I shall be pleased, as the heroine is a favourite of mine: if not, I shall also be pleased; because I wish, and will be glad, to see you act decidedly on the business. 'Tis a tribute as a man of taste, and as an editor, which you owe yourself.

No. XXXII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY GOOD SIR, *August,* 1793.

I CONSIDER it one of the most agreeable circumstances attending this publication of mine, that it has procured me so many of your much valued epistles. Pray make my acknowledgments to St. Stephen for the tunes; tell him I admit the justness of his complaint on my staircase, conveyed in his laconic postscript to your *jeu d'esprit;* which I perused more than once, without discovering exactly whether your discussion was music, astronomy, or politics; though a sagacious friend, acquainted with the convivial habits of the poet and the musician, offered me a bet of two to one, you were just drowning care together; that an empty bowl was the only thing that would deeply affect you, and the only matter you could then study how to remedy!

I shall be glad to see you give *Robin Adair* a Scottish dress. Peter is furnishing him with an English suit for a change, and you are well matched together. Robin's air is excellent, though he certainly has an out of the way measure as ever poor Parnassian wight was plagued with. I wish you would invoke the muse for a single elegant stanza to be substituted for the concluding objectionable verses of *Down the burn Davie,* so that this most exquisite song may no longer be excluded from good company.

Mr. Allan has made an inimitable drawing from your *John Anderson my Jo,* which I am to have engraved, as a frontispiece to the humorous class of songs; you will be quite charmed with it, I promise you. The old couple are seated by the fireside. Mrs. Anderson, in great

good humour, is clapping John's shoulders, while he smiles and looks at her with such glee, as to show that he *fully* recollects the pleasant days and nights when they were *first acquent*. The drawing would do honour to the pencil of Teniers.

No. XXXIII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

August, 1793.

THAT crinkum-crankum tune, *Robin Adair*, has run so in my head, and I succeeded so ill in my last attempt, that I have ventured, in this morning's walk, one essay more. You, my dear Sir, will remember an unfortunate part of our worthy friend C.'s story, which happened about three years ago. That struck my fancy, and I endeavoured to do the idea justice, as follows.

. . . . . .

(*Had I a cave, p.* 203.)

By the way, I have met with a musical Highlander, in Breadalbane's fencibles, which are quartered here, who assures me that he well remembers his mother's singing Gaelic songs to both *Robin Adair* and *Gramachree*. They certainly have more of the Scotch than Irish taste in them.

This man comes from the vicinity of Inverness; so it could not be any intercourse with Ireland that could bring them;—except, what I shrewdly suspect to be the case, the wandering minstrels, harpers, and pipers, used to go frequently errant through the wilds both of Scotland and Ireland, and so some favourite airs might be common to both.—A case in point—They have lately, in Ireland, published an Irish air, as they say, called *Caun du delish*. The fact is, in a publication of Corri's, a great while ago, you will find the same air, called a Highland one, with a Gaelic song set to it. Its name there, I think, is *Oran Gaoil*, and a fine air it is. Do ask honest Allan, or the Rev. Gaelic parson, about these matters.

No. XXXIV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

MY DEAR SIR, *August*, 1793.

Let me in this ae night, I will reconsider. I am glad you are pleased with my song, *Had I a cave*, &c. as I liked it myself.

I walked out yesterday evening with a volume of the Museum in my hand; when, turning up *Allan Water*, "What numbers shall the muse repeat," &c. as the words appeared to me rather unworthy of so fine an air; and recollecting that it is on your list, I sat and raved under the shade of an old thorn, till I wrote out one to suit the measure. I may be wrong; but I think it not in my worst style. You must know, that in Ramsay's Tea-table, where the modern song first appeared, the ancient name of the tune, Allan says, is *Allan Water*, or, *My love Annie's very bonnie*. This last has certainly been a line of the original song; so I took up the idea, and, as you will see, have introduced the line in its place, which I presume it formerly occupied; though I likewise give you a *choosing line*, if it should not hit the cut of your fancy.

(*By Allan streams I chanced to rove, While Phœbus sank beyond Benleddi, p.* 190.)

Bravo! say I; it is a good song. Should you think so too, (not else) you can set the music to it, and let the other follow as English verses.

Autumn is my propitious season. I make more verses in it than in all the year else.

God bless you!

No. XXXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

August, 1793.

Is *Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad*, one of your airs? I admire it much; and yesterday I set the following verses to it. Urbani, whom I met with here, begged them of me, as he admires the air much; but as I understand that he looks with rather an evil eye on your work, I did not choose to comply. However, if the song does not suit your taste, I may possibly send it him. The set of the air which I had in my eye, is in Johnson's Museum.

. . . . . .

(*O whistle and I'll come to you, my lad, p.* 242.)

Another favourite air of mine is, *The muckin o' Geordie's byre*. When sung slow, with expression, I have wished that it had had better poetry: that I have endeavoured to supply, as follows:—

(*Phillis the Fair, p.* 222.)

Mr. Clarke begs you to give Miss Phillis a corner in your book, as she is a particular flame of his. She is a Miss P. M., sister to *bonnie Jean*. They are both pupils of his. You shall hear from me, the very first grist I get from my rhyming mill.

No. XXXVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

August, 1793.

That tune, *Cauld Kail*, is such a favourite of yours, that I once more roved out yesterday for a gloamin-shot at the muses; * when the muse that presides o'er the shores of Nith, or rather my old inspiring dearest nymph Coila, whispered me the following. I have two reasons for thinking that it was my early, sweet, simple inspirer that was by my elbow, "smooth gliding without step," and pouring the song on my glowing fancy. In the first place, since I left Coila's native haunts, not a fragment of a poet has arisen to cheer her solitary musings, by catching inspiration from her; so I more than suspect that she has followed me hither, or at least makes me occasional visits; secondly, the last stanza of this song I send you in the very words that Coila taught me many years ago, and which I set to an old Scots reel in Johnson's Museum.

(*Come let me take thee to my breast*, p. 197.)

If you think the above will suit your idea of your favourite air, I shall be highly pleased. *The last time I came o'er the Moor*, I cannot meddle with, as to mending it: and the musical world have been so long accustomed to Ramsay's words, that a different song, though positively superior, would not be so well received. I am not fond of choruses to songs, so I have not made one for the foregoing.

No. XXXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

(*Dainty Davie*, p. 198.)

August, 1793.

So much for Davie. The chorus, you know, is to the low part of the tune. See Clarke's set of it in the Museum.

N. B. In the Museum they have drawled out the tune to twelve lines of poetry, which is ——— nonsense. Four lines of song, and four of chorus, is the way.

* Gloamin—twilight, properly from glooming. A beautiful poetical word which ought to be adopted in England. A gloamin-shot, a twilight interview.

No. XXXVIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

my dear sir, *Edinburgh, 1st Sept.* 1793.

Since writing you last, I have received half a dozen songs, with which I am delighted beyond expression. The humour and fancy of *Whistle and I'll come to you, my lad*, will render it nearly as great a favourite as *Duncan Gray*. *Come let me take thee to my breast, Adown winding Nith*, and *By Allan stream*, &c. are full of imagination and feeling, and sweetly suit the airs for which they are intended. *Had I a cave on some wild distant shore*, is a striking and affecting composition. Our friend, to whose story it refers, read it with a swelling heart, I assure you. The union we are now forming, I think, can never be broken; these songs of yours will descend with the music to the latest posterity, and will be fondly cherished so long as genius, taste, and sensibility exist in our island.

While the muse seems so propitious, I think it right to enclose a list of all the favours I have to ask of her, no fewer than twenty and three! I have burdened the pleasant Peter with as many as it is probable he will attend to: most of the remaining airs would puzzle the English poet not a little; they are of that peculiar measure and rhythm, that they must be familiar to him who writes for them.

No. XXXIX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

Sept. 1793.

You may readily trust, my dear Sir, that any exertion in my power is heartily at your service. But one thing I must hint to you; the very name of Peter Pindar is of great service to your publication, so get a verse from him now and then; though I have no objection, as well as I can, to bear the burden of the business.

You know that my pretensions to musical taste are merely a few of nature's instincts, untaught and untutored by art. For this reason, many musical compositions, particularly where much of the merit lies in counterpoint; however they may transport and ravish the ears of you connisseurs, affect my simple lug no otherwise than merely as melodious din. On the other hand, by way of amends, I am delighted with many little melodies, which the learned musician despises as silly and insipid. I do not know whether the old air *Hey tuttie taitie* may rank among this number; but well I know that, with Fraser's hautboy, it has often filled my eyes with tears. There is a tradition, which I have met with in many places of Scotland, that it was Robert Bruce's march at the battle

of Bannockburn. This thought, in my solitary wanderings, warmed me to a pitch of enthusiasm on the theme of Liberty and Independence, which I threw into a kind of SCOTTISH ode, fitted to the air that one might suppose to be the gallant ROYAL SCOT's address to his heroic followers on that eventful morning.

. . . . . .

(*Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled, p.* 195.)

So may God ever defend the cause of Truth and Liberty, as he did that day!—Amen.

P. S.—I showed the air to Urbani, who was highly pleased with it, and begged me to make soft verses for it; but I had no idea of giving myself any trouble on the subject, till the accidental recollection of that glorious struggle for freedom, associated with the glowing ideas of some other struggles of the same nature, not quite so ancient, roused my rhyming mania. Clarke's set of the tune, with his bass, you will find in the Museum; though I am afraid that the air is not what will entitle it to a place in your elegant selection.

No. XL.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Sept. 1793.

I DARE say, my dear Sir, that you will begin to think my correspondence is persecution. No matter, I can't help it; a ballad is my hobby-horse; which, though otherwise a simple sort of harmless, idiotical beast enough, has yet this blessed headstrong property, that when once it has fairly made off with a hapless wight, it gets so enamoured with the tinkle-gingle, tinkle-gingle of its own bells, that it is sure to run poor pilgarlick, the bedlam jockey, quite beyond any useful point or post in the common race of man.

The following song I have composed for *Oran-gaoil*, the Highland air that, you tell me in your last, you have resolved to give a place to in your book. I have this moment finished the song; so you have it glowing from the mint. If it suit you, well! if not, 'tis also well!

. . . . . .

(*Behold the hour the boat arrives, p.* 193.)

No. XLI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

Edinburgh, 5th Sept. 1793.

I BELIEVE it is generally allowed that the greatest modesty is the sure attendant of the greatest merit. While you are sending me verses that even Shakspeare might be proud to own, you speak of them as if they were ordinary productions! Your heroic ode is to me the noblest composition of the kind in the Scottish language. I happened to dine yesterday with a party of your friends, to whom I read it. They were all charmed with it, entreated me to find out a suitable air for it, and reprobated the idea of giving it a tune so totally devoid of interest or grandeur as *Hey tuttie taitie.* Assuredly your partiality for this tune must arise from the ideas associated in your mind by the tradition concerning it, for I never heard any person,—and I have conversed again and again with the greatest enthusiasts for Scottish airs,—I say I never heard any one speak of it as worthy of notice.

I have been running over the whole hundred airs, of which I lately sent you the list; and I think *Lewie Gordon* is most happily adapted to your ode; at least with a very slight variation of the fourth line, which I shall presently submit to you. There is in *Lewie Gordon* more of the grand than the plaintive, particularly when it is sung with a degree of spirit, which your words would oblige the singer to give it. I would have no scruple about substituting your ode in the room of *Lewie Gordon,* which has neither the interest, the grandeur, nor the poetry that characterise your verses. Now, the variation I have to suggest upon the last line of each verse, the only line too short for the air, is as follows:—

Verse 1*st,* Or to *glorious* victorie.
2*d,* *Chains*—chains and slaverie.
3*d,* Let him, *let him* turn and flie.
4*th,* Let him *bravely* follow me.
5*th,* But *they shall,* they shall be free.
6*th,* Let us, *let us* do, or die!

If you connect each line with its own verse, I do not think you will find that either the sentiment or the expression loses any of its energy. The only line which I dislike in the whole of the song is, "Welcome to your gory bed.' Would not another word be preferable to *welcome?* In your next I will expect to be informed whether you agree to what I have proposed. These little alterations I submit with the greatest deference.

The beauty of the verses you have made for *Oran-gaoil* will insure celebrity to the air.

No. XLII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

I HAVE received your list, my dear Sir, and here go my observations on it.*

Down the burn Davie. I have this moment tried an alteration, leaving out the last half of the third stanza, and the first half of the last stanza, thus :—

As down the burn they took their way,
And thro' the flowery dale ;
His cheek to hers he aft did lay,
And love was aye the tale.

With "Mary, when shall we return,
Sic pleasure to renew ?"
Quoth Mary, "Love, I like the burn,
And aye shall follow you." †

Thro' the wood laddie—I am decidedly of opinion, that both in this, and *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*, the second or high part of the tune being a repetition of the first part an octave higher, is only for instrumental music, and would be much better omitted in singing.

Cowden-knowes. Remember in your index that the song in pure English to this tune, beginning

"When summer comes, the swains on Tweed,"

is the production of Crawford : Robert was his Christian name.

Laddie lie near me, must *lie by me* for some time. I do not know the air ; and until I am complete master of a tune, in my own singing, (such as it is), I can never compose for it. My way is : I consider the poetic sentiment correspondent to my idea of the musical expression ; then choose my theme ; begin one stanza ; when that is composed, which is generally the most difficult part of the business, I walk out, sit down, and then look out for objects in nature around me, that are in unison or harmony with the cogitations of my fancy, and workings of my bosom ; humming every now and then the air, with the verses I have framed. When I feel my muse beginning to jade, I retire to the solitary fireside of my study, and there commit my effusions to paper ; swinging at intervals on the hind legs of my elbow-chair, by way of calling forth my own critical strictures, as my pen goes on. Seriously, this, at home, is almost invariably my way.

What cursed egotism !

Gill Morice I am for leaving out. It is a plaguey length ; the air itself is never sung ; and its place can well be supplied by one or two songs for fine airs that are not in your list. For instance, *Craigieburn-wood* and *Roy's Wife*. The first, beside its intrinsic merit, has novelty ; and the last has high merit, as well as great celebrity. I have the original words of a song for the last air, in the hand-writing of the lady who composed it ; and they are superior to any edition of the song which the public has yet seen.

Highland Laddie. The old set will please a mere Scotch ear best ; and the new an Italianized one. There is a third, and what Oswald calls the old *Highland Laddie*, which pleases me more than either of them. It is sometimes called *Ginglan Johnnie ;* it being the air of an old humorous tawdry song of that name. You will find it in the Museum, *I hae been at Crookie-den*, &c. I would advise you, in this musical quandary, to offer up your prayers to the muses for inspiring direction ; and in the meantime, waiting for this direction, bestow a libation to Bacchus ; and there is not a doubt but you will hit on a judicious choice. *Probatum est.*

Auld Sir Simon, I must beg you to leave out, and put in its place, *The Quaker's wife.*

Blythe hae I been o'er the hill, is one of the finest songs ever I made in my life ; and besides, is composed on a young lady, positively the most beautiful, lovely woman in the world. As I purpose giving you the names and designations of all my heroines, to appear in some future edition of your work, perhaps half a century hence, you must certainly include *the bonniest lass in a' the warld* in your collection.

Daintie Davie, I have heard sung, nineteen thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine times, and always with the chorus to the low part of the tune ; and nothing has surprised me so much as your opinion on this subject. If it will not suit, as I proposed, we will lay two of the stanzas together, and then make the chorus follow.

Fee him father—I enclose you Fraser's set of this tune when he plays it slow ; in fact, he makes it the language of despair. I shall here give you two stanzas in that style ; merely to try if it will be any improvement. Were it possible, in singing, to give it half the pathos which Fraser gives it in playing, it would make an admirable pathetic song. I do not give these verses for any merit they have. I composed them at the time in which *Patie Allan's mither died, that was about the back o' midnight ;* and by the leeside of a bowl of punch, which had overset every mortal in company, except the hautbois and the muse.

. . . . . .

(*Thou hast left me ever, Jamie*, p. 239.)

Jockie and Jenny I would discard, and in its place would put *There's nae luck about*

* Mr. Thomson's list of songs for his publication. In his remarks, the bard proceeds in order, and goes through the whole ; but on many of them he merely signifies his approbation. All his remarks of any importance are presented to the reader.

† This alteration Mr. Thomson has adopted, (or at least intended to adopt), instead of the last stanza of the original song, which is objectionable in point of delicacy.

the house, which has a very pleasant air; and which is positively the finest love-ballad in that style in the Scottish, or perhaps in any other language. *When she cam ben she bobbet*, as an air, is more beautiful than either, and in the *andante* way, would unite with a charming sentimental ballad.

Saw ye my father, is one of my greatest favourites. The evening before last, I wandered out, and began a tender song; in what I think is its native style. I must premise, that the old way, and the way to give most effect, is to have no starting note, as the fiddlers call it, but to burst at once into the pathos. Every country girl sings—Saw *ye my father, &c.*

My song is but just begun; and I should like, before I proceed, to know your opinion of it. I have sprinkled it with the Scottish dialect, but it may be easily turned into correct English.—(*p.* 242.)

. . . . . .

Todlin' hame. Urbani mentioned an idea of his, which has long been mine; that this air is highly susceptible of pathos; accordingly, you will soon hear him, at your concert, try it to a song of mine in the Museum, *Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon.*—One song more and I have done: *Auld lang syne.* The air is but *mediocre;* but the following song, the old song of the olden times, and which has never been in print, nor even in manuscript, until I took it down from an old man's singing, is enough to recommend any air.

. . . . . .

(*Auld lang syne, p.* 191.)

Now, I suppose I have tired your patience fairly. You must, after all is over, have a number of ballads, properly so called. *Gill Morice, Tranent Muir, M'Pherson's Farewell, Battle of Sheriff-muir,* or *We ran and they ran,* (I know the author of this charming ballad, and his history), *Hardyknute, Barbara Allan,* (I can furnish a finer set of this tune than any thing that has yet appeared); and besides, do you know that I really have the old tune to which *The Cherry and the Slae* was sung; and which is mentioned as a well known air in Scotland's Complaint, a book published before poor Mary's days. It was then called *The banks o' Helicon;* an old poem which Pinkerton has brought to light. You will see all this in Tytler's History of Scottish Music. The tune, to a learned ear, may have no great merit; but it is a great curiosity. I have a good many original things of this kind.

No. XLIII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON

September, 1793.

I AM happy, my dear sir, that my ode pleases you so much. Your idea, "honour's bed," is, though a beautiful, a hackneyed idea; so, if you please, we will let the line stand as it is. I have altered the song as follows:—

(*Bannock-burn, p.* 195.)

N. B.—I have borrowed the last stanza from the common stall edition of Wallace.

"A false usurper sinks in every foe,
And liberty returns with every blow."

A couplet worthy of Homer. Yesterday you had enough of my correspondence. The post goes, and my head aches miserably. One comfort; I suffer so much, just now, in this world, for last night's joviality, that I shall escape scot-free for it in the world to come. Amen!

No. XLIV.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

12*th September*, 1793.

A THOUSAND thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your observations on the list of my songs. I am happy to find your ideas so much in unison with my own respecting the generality of the airs, as well as the verses. About some of them we differ, but there is no disputing about hobby-horses. I shall not fail to profit by the remarks you make; and to re-consider the whole with attention.

Daintie Davie must be sung, two stanzas together, and then the chorus—'tis the proper way. I agree with you, that there may be something of pathos, or tenderness at least, in the air of *Fee him, father,* when performed with feeling; but a tender cast may be given almost to any lively air, if you sing it very slowly, expressively, and with serious words. I am, however, clearly and invariably for retaining the cheerful tunes joined to their own humorous verses, wherever the verses are passable. But the sweet song for *Fee him, father,* which you began about the back of midnight, I will publish as an additional one. Mr. James Balfour, the king of good fellows, and the best singer of the lively Scottish ballads that ever existed, has charmed thousands of companies with *Fee him, father,* and with *Todlin hame* also, to the old words, which never should be disunited from either of these airs. Some Bacchanals I would wish to discard. *Fy let us a' to the bridal,* for instance, is so coarse and vulgar, that I think it fit only to be sung in a company of drunken col-

liers; and *Saw ye my father* appears to me both indelicate and silly.

One word more with regard to your heroic ode. I think, with great deference to the poet, that a prudent general would avoid saying any thing to his soldiers which might tend to make death more frightful than it is. Gory presents a disagreeable image to the mind; and to tell them, "Welcome to your gory bed," seems rather a discouraging address, notwithstanding the alternative which follows. I have shown the song to three friends of excellent taste, and each of them objected to this line, which emboldens me to use the freedom of bringing it again under your notice. I would suggest,

"Now prepare for honour's bed,
Or for glorious victorie."

No. XLV.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

September, 1793.

"WHO shall decide when doctors disagree?" My ode pleases me so much that I cannot alter it. Your proposed alterations would, in my opinion, make it tame. I am exceedingly obliged to you for putting me on re-considering it; as I think I have much improved it. Instead of "sodger! hero!" I will have it "Caledonian! on wi' me!"

I have scrutinized it over and over; and to the world some way or other it shall go as it is. At the same time it will not in the least hurt me should you leave it out altogether and adhere to your first intention of adopting Logan's verses.*

I have finished my song to *Saw ye my father*; and in English, as you will see. That there is a syllable too much for the *expression* of the air, is true; but allow me to say, that the mere dividing of a dotted crotchet into a crotchet and a quaver, is not a great matter: however, in that I have no pretensions to cope in judgment with you. Of the poetry I speak with confidence; but the music is a business where I hint my ideas with the utmost diffidence.

The old verses have merit, though unequal, and are popular; my advice is to set the air to the old words, and let mine follow as English verses. Here they are—

(*Where are the joys I hae met in the morning, p.* 242.)

Adieu, my dear Sir! The post goes, so I shall defer some other remarks until more leisure.

No. XLVI.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

September, 1792.

I HAVE been turning over some volumes of songs, to find verses whose measures would suit the airs for which you have allotted me to find English songs.

For *Muirland Willie*, you have, in Ramsay's Tea-table, an excellent song, beginning "Ah, why those tears in Nelly's eyes?" As for *The Collier's Dochter*, take the following old Bacchanal.

. . . . . .

(*Deluded Swain, p.* 198.)

The faulty line in Logan-water, I mend thus:

"How can your flinty hearts enjoy
The widow's tears, the orphan's cry?"

The song, otherwise, will pass. As to *M'Gregoira-Rua-Ruth*, you will see a song of mine to it, with a set of the air superior to yours, in the Museum, Vol. ii. p. 181. The song begins,

"Raving winds around her blowing."

Your Irish airs are pretty, but they are downright Irish. If they were like the *Banks of Banna*, for instance, though really Irish, yet in the Scottish taste, you might adopt them. Since you are so fond of Irish music, what say you to twenty-five of them in an additional number? We could easily find this quantity of charming airs; I will take care that you shall not want songs; and I assure you that you will find it the most saleable of the whole. If you do not approve of *Roy's wife*, for the music's sake, we shall not insert it. *Deil tak' the wars*, is a charming song; so is, *Saw ye my Peggy? There's nae luck about the house*, well deserves a place; I cannot say that *O'er the hills and far awa* strikes me as equal to your selection. *This is no my ain house* is a great favourite air of mine; and if you send me your set of it, I will task my muse to her highest effort. What is your opinion of *I hae laid a herrin in sawt?* I like it much. Your Jacobite airs are pretty; and there are many others of the same kind, pretty—but you have not room for them. You cannot, I think, insert, *Fy let us a' to the bridle*, to any other words than its own.

* Mr. Thomson has very properly adopted this song (if it may be so called) as the bard presented it to him. He has attached it to the air of *Lewie Gordon*, and perhaps among the existing airs he could not find a better; but the poetry is suited to a much higher strain of music, and may employ the genius of some Scottish Handel, if any such should in future arise. The reader will have observed, that Burns adopted the alterations proposed by his friend and correspondent in former instances with great readiness; perhaps, indeed, on all indifferent occasions. In the present instance, however, he rejected them, though repeatedly urged, with determined resolution.

What pleases me, as simple and *naive*, disgusts you as ludicrous and low. For this reason, *Fye, gie me my coggie, sirs—Fye, let us a' to the bridal*, with several others of that cast, are, to me, highly pleasing; while, *Saw ye my father, or saw ye my Mother*, delights me with its discriptive simple pathos. Thus, my song, *Ken ye what Meg o' the mill has gotten?* pleases myself so much, that I cannot try my hand at another song to the air; so I shall not attempt it. I know you will laugh at all this; but, "ilka man wears his belt his ain gait."

No. XLVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

October, 1793.

Your last letter, my dear Thomson, was indeed laden with heavy news. Alas, poor Erskine![*] The recollection that he was a coadjutor in your publication, has, till now, scared me from writing to you, or turning my thoughts on composing for you.

I am pleased that you are reconciled to the air of the *Quaker's Wife*, though, by the bye, an old Highland gentleman, and a deep antiquarian, tells me it is a Gaelic air, and known by the name of *Leiger 'm choss*. The following verses I hope will please you, as an English song to the air:

Thine am I, my faithful fair,
Thine, my lovely Nancy. (*p.* 214.)

The rest of your letter I shall answer at some other opportunity.

No. XLVIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY GOOD SIR, *7th November*, 1793.

After so long a silence, it gives me peculiar pleasure to recognize your well known hand, for I had begun to be apprehensive that all was not well with you. I am happy to find however, that your silence did not proceed from that cause, and that you have got among the ballads once more.

I have to thank you for your English song to *Leiger 'm choss*, which I think extremly good, although the colouring is warm. Your friend Mr. Turnbull's songs have doubtless considerable merit; and as you have the command of his manuscripts, I hope you may find out some that will answer as English songs to the airs yet unprovided.

[*] The Honourable A. Erskine, brother to Lord Kelly, whose melancholy death Mr. Thomson had communicated in an excellent letter, which he has suppressed.

No. XLIX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

December, 1793.

Tell me how you like the following verses to the tune of *Jo Janet*.

(*Husband, husband, cease your strife*, *p.* 213.)
(*Wilt thou be my dearie?* *p.* 242.)

No L.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 17*th April*, 1794.

Owing to the distress of our friend for the loss of his child, at the time of his receiving your admirable but melancholy letter, I had not an opportunity 'till lately of perusing it.[*] How sorry am I to find Burns saying, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" while *he* is delighting others from one end of the island to the other. Like the hypochondriac who went to consult a physician upon his case: Go, says the doctor, and see the famous Carlini, who keeps all Paris in good humour. Alas! Sir, replied the patient, I am that unhappy Carlini!

Your plan for our meeting together pleases me greatly, and I trust that by some means or other it will soon take place; but your Bacchanalian challenge almost frightens me, for I am a miserable weak drinker!

Allan is much gratified by your good opinion of his talents. He has just begun a sketch from your Cotter's Saturday Night, and if it pleases himself in the design, he will probably etch or engrave it. In subjects of the pastoral or humorous kind, he is perhaps unrivalled by any artist living. He fails a little in giving beauty and grace to his females, and his colouring is *sombre*, otherwise his paintings and drawings would be in greater request.

I like the music of the *Sutor's Dochter*, and will consider whether it shall be added to the last volume; your verses to it are pretty; but your humorous English song, to suit *Jo Janet*, is inimitable. What think you of the air, "Within a mile of Edinburgh?" It has always struck me as a modern English imitation; but is said to be Oswald's, and is so much liked, that I believe I must include it. The verses are lit-

[*] A letter to Mr. Cunningham, to be found in p. 379.

tle better than *namby pamby*. Do you consider it worth a stanza or two?

No. LI.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR, *May*, 1794.

I RETURN you the plates, with which I am highly pleased; I would humbly propose, instead of the younker knitting stockings, to put a stock and horn into his hands. A friend of mine, who is positively the ablest judge on the subject I have ever met with, and though an unknown, is yet a superior artist with the *Burin*, is quite charmed with Allan's manner. I got him a peep of the Gentle Shepherd; and he pronounces Allan a most original artist of great excellence.

For my part, I look on Mr. Allan's choosing my favourite poem for his subject, to be one of the highest compliments I have ever received.

I am quite vexed at Pleyel's being cooped up in France, as it will put an entire stop to our work. Now, and for six or seven months, *I shall be quite in song*, as you shall see by and by. I got an air, pretty enough, composed by Lady Elizaberh Heron of Heron, which she calls *The Banks of Cree*. Cree is a beautiful romantic stream: and as her Ladyship is a particular friend of mine, I have written the following song to it.

. . . . . .

(*The Banks of Cree, p.* 226.)

No. LII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

July, 1794.

Is there no news yet of Pleyel? Or is your work to be at a dead stop, until the allies set our modern Orpheus at liberty from the savage thraldom of democratic discords? Alas the day! And woe's me! That auspicious period, pregnant with the happiness of millions.*—. . . . . .

I have presented a copy of your songs to the daughter of a much-valued, and much-honoured friend of mine, Mr. Graham of Fintry. I wrote, on the blank side of the title page, the following address to the young lady.

. . . . . .

HERE, where the Scottish muse immortal lives,
In sacred strains and tuneful numbers join'd,
Accept the gift; though humble he who gives,
Rich is the tribute of the grateful mind.

So may no ruffian feeling in thy breast,
Discordant jar thy bosom-chords among;
But peace attune thy gentle soul to rest,
Or love ecstatic wake his seraph song.

Or pity's notes, in luxury of tears,
As modest want the tale of woe reveals;
While conscious virtue all the strain endears,
And heaven-born piety her sanction seals.

No. LIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 10*th Aug.* 1794.

I OWE you an apology for having so long delayed to acknowledge the favour of your last. I fear it will be as you say, I shall have no more songs from Pleyel till France and we are friends; but, nevertheless, I am very desirous to be prepared with the poetry, and as the season approaches in which your muse of Coila visits you, I trust I shall, as formerly, be frequently gratified with the result of your amorous and tender interviews!

No. LIV.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

30*th August*, 1794.

THE last evening, as I was straying out and thinking of, *O'er the hills and far awa*, I spun the following stanza for it; but whether my spinning will deserve to be laid up in store like the precious thread of the silk-worm, or brushed to the devil, like the vile manufacture of the spider, I leave, my dear Sir, to your usual candid criticism. I was pleased with several lines in it at first; but I own, that now, it appears rather a flimsy business.

This is just a hasty sketch, until I see whether it be worth a critique. We have many sailor songs; but, as far as I at present recollect, they are mostly the effusions of the jovial sailor, not the wailings of his love-lorn mistress. I must here make one sweet exception —*Sweet Annie frae the Sea-beach came.* Now for the song.

(*On the seas and far away, p.* 219.)

* A portion of this letter has been left out, for reasons that will be easily imagined.—CURRIE.

I give you leave to abuse this song, but do it in the spirit of christian meekness.

No. LV.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, 16th Sept.* 1794.

You have anticipated my opinion of, *On the seas and far away;* I do not think it one of your very happy productions, though it certainly contains stanzas that are worthy of all acceptation.

The second is the least to my liking, particularly "Bullets, spare my only joy." Confound the bullets! It might perhaps be objected to the third verse, "At the starless midnight hour," that it has too much grandeur of imagery, and that greater simplicity of thought would have better suited the character of a sailor's sweetheart. The tune, it must be remembered, is of the brisk, cheerful kind. Upon the whole, therefore, in my humble opinion, the song would be better adapted to the tune, if it consisted only of the first and last verses, with the chorusses.

No. LVI.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

Sept. 1794.

I SHALL withdraw my, *On the seas and far away,* altogether: it is unequal, and unworthy the work. Making a poem is like begetting a son: you cannot know whether you have a wise man or a fool, until you produce him to the world and try him.

For that reason I send you the offspring of my brain, *abortions* and all; and, as such, pray look over them, and forgive them, and burn them.* I am flattered at your adopting, *Ca' the yowes to the knowes,* as it was owing to me that ever it saw the light. About seven years ago I was well acquainted with a worthy little fellow of a clergyman, a Mr. Clunie, who sung it charmingly; and, at my request, Mr. Clarke took it down from his singing. When I gave it to Johnson, I added some stanzas to the song, and mended others, but still it will not do for you. In a solitary stroll which I took to-day, I tried my hand on a few pastoral lines, following up the idea of the chorus, which I would preserve. Here it is, with all its crudities and imperfections on its head.

. . . . . .

(*Ca' the yowes to the knowes, p.* 195.)

I shall give you my opinion of your other newly adopted songs my first scribbling fit.

No. LVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

September, 1794.

Do you know a blackguard Irish song, called *Onagh's water-fall?* The air is charming, and I have often regretted the want of decent verses to it. It is too much, at least for my humble rustic muse, to expect that every effort of hers shall have merit; still I think that it is better to have mediocre verses to a favourite air, than none at all. On this principle I have all along proceeded in the Scots Musical Museum, and as that publication is in its last volume, I intend the following song, to the air above mentioned, for that work.

If it does not suit you as an editor, you may be pleased to have verses to it that you can sing before ladies.

(*Sae flaxen were her ringlets, p.* 223.)

Not to compare small things with great, my taste in music is like the mighty Frederick of Prussia's taste in painting: we are told that he frequently admired what the connoisseurs decried, and always without any hypocrisy confessed his admiration. I am sensible that my taste in music must be inelegant and vulgar, because people of undisputed and cultivated taste can find no merit in my favourite tunes. Still, because I am cheaply pleased, is that any reason why I should deny myself that pleasure? Many of our strathspeys, ancient and modern, give me the most exquisite enjoyment, where you and other judges would probably be showing disgust. For instance, I am just now making verses for *Rothemurche's Rant,* an air which puts me in raptures; and in fact, unless I be pleased with the tune, I never can make verses to it. Here I have Clarke on my side, who is a judge that I will pit against any of you. "*Rothemurche,*" he says, "is an air both original and beautiful;" and on his recommendation I have taken the first part of the tune for a chorus, and the fourth or last part for the song. I am but two stanzas deep in the work, and possibly you may think, and justly, that the poetry is as little worth your attention as the music.*

I have begun anew, *Let me in this ae night.* Do you think that we ought to retain the old chorus? I think we must retain both the old

* This Virgilian order of the poet should, I think, be disobeyed with respect to the song in question, the second stanza excepted.—*Note by Mr. Thomson.*

Doctors differ. The objection to the second stanza does not strike the Editor.—CURRIE.

* In the original follow here two stanzas of the song, "Lassie wi' the lint-white locks."

chorus and the first stanza of the old song. I do not altogether like the third line of the first stanza, but cannot alter it to please myself. I am just three stanzas deep in it. Would you have the *denouement* to be successful or otherwise?—should she "let him in" or not.

Did you not once propose *The Sow's tail to Geordie*, as an air for your work? I am quite delighted with it; but I acknowledge that is no mark of its real excellence. I once set about verses for it, which I meant to be in the alternate way of a lover and his mistress chanting together. I have not the pleasure of knowing Mrs. Thomson's Christian name, and yours, I am afraid, is rather burlesque for sentiment, else I had meant to have made you the hero and heroine of the little piece.

How do you like the following epigram, which I wrote the other day on a lovely young girl's recovery from a fever? Doctor Maxwell was the physician who seemingly saved her from the grave; and to him I address the following:—

* * * * * * * * *

TO DR. MAXWELL,

ON MISS JESSY STAIG'S RECOVERY.

MAXWELL, if merit here you crave,
That merit I deny:
You save fair Jessy from the grave!
An angel could not die!

God grant you patience with this stupid epistle!

No. LVIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

I PERCEIVE the sprightly muse is now attendant upon her favourite poet, whose *wood-notes wild* are become as enchanting as ever. *She says she lo'es me best o' a'*, is one of the pleasantest table songs I have seen, and henceforth shall be mine when the song is going round. I'll give Cunningham a copy; he can more powerfully proclaim its merit. I am far from undervaluing your taste for the strathspey music; on the contrary, I think it highly animating and agreeable, and that some of the strathspeys, when graced with such verses as yours, will make very pleasing songs, in the same way that rough Christians are tempered and softened by lovely woman, without whom, you know, they had been brutes.

I am clear for having the *Sow's tail*, particularly as you proposed verses to it are so extremely promising. Geordie, as you observe, is a name only fit for burlesque composition. Mrs. Thomson's name (Katharine) is not at all poetical. Retain Jeanie, therefore, and make the other Jamie, or any other that sounds agreeably.

Your *Ca' the yewes*, is a precious little morceau. Indeed I am perfectly astonished and charmed with the endless variety of your fancy. Here let me ask you, whether you never seriously turned your thoughts upon dramatic writing? That is a field worthy of your genius, in which it might shine forth in all its splendour. One or two successful pieces upon the London stage would make your fortune. The rage at present is for musical dramas; few or none of those which have appeared since the *Duenna*, possess much poetical merit: there is little in the conduct of the fable, or in the dialogue, to interest the audience. They are chiefly vehicles for music and pageantry. I think you might produce a comic opera in three acts, which would live by the poetry, at the same time that it would be proper to take every assistance from her tuneful sister. Part of the songs of course would be to our favourite Scottish airs; the rest might be left with the London composer—Storace for Drury-lane, or Shield for Covent-garden; both of them very able and popular musicians. I believe that interest and manœuvring are often necessary to have a drama brought on: so it may be with the namby pamby tribe of flowery scribblers; but were you to address Mr. Sheridan himself by letter, and send him a dramatic piece, I am persuaded he would, for the honour of genius, give it a fair and candid trial. Excuse me for obtruding these hints upon your consideration.*

No. LIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Edinburgh, 14th October, 1794.

THE last eight days have been devoted to the re-examination of the Scottish collections. I have read, and sung, and fiddled, and considered, till I am half blind and wholly stupid. The few airs I have added, are enclosed.

Peter Pindar has at length sent me all the songs I expected from him, which are in general elegant and beautiful. Have you heard of a London collection of Scottish airs and songs, just published by Mr. Ritson, an Englishman. I shall send you a copy. His introductory essay on the subject is curious, and evinces great reading and research, but does not decide the question as to the origin of our melodies; though he shows clearly that Mr. Tytler, in his ingenious dissertation, has adduced no sort of proof of the hypothesis he wished to establish; and that his classification of the airs, according

* Our bard had before received the same advice, and certainly took it so far into consideration, as to have cast about for a subject.

to the eras when they were composed, is mere fancy and conjecture. On John Pinkerton, Esq. he has no mercy; but consigns him to damnation! He snarls at my publication, on the score of Pindar being engaged to write songs for it; uncandidly and unjustly leaving it to be inferred, that the songs of Scottish writers had been sent a-packing to make room for Peter's! Of you he speaks with some respect, but gives you a passing hit or two, for daring to dress up a little some old foolish songs for the Museum. His sets of the Scottish airs are taken, he says, from the oldest collections and the best authorities: many of them, however, have such a strange aspect, and are so unlike the sets which are sung by every person of taste, old or young, in town or country, that we can scarcely recognize the features of our favourites. By going to the oldest collections of our music, it does not follow that we find the melodies in their original state. These melodies had been preserved, we know not how long, by oral communication, before being collected and printed; and as different persons sing the same air very differently, according to their accurate or confused recollection of it, so even supposing the first collectors to have possessed the industry, the taste and discernment to choose the best they could hear, (which is far from certain), still it must evidently be a chance, whether the collections exhibit any of the melodies in the state they were first composed. In selecting the melodies for my own collection, I have been as much guided by the living as by the dead. Where these differed, I preferred the sets that appeared to me the most simple and beautiful, and the most generally approved; and, without meaning any compliment to my own capability of choosing, or speaking of the pains I have taken, I flatter myself that my sets will be found equally freed from vulgar errors on the one hand, and affected graces on the other.

No. LX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

MY DEAR FRIEND, 19*th October*, 1794.

By this morning's post I have your list, and, in general, I highly approve of it. I shall, at more leisure, give you a critique on the whole. Clarke goes to your town by to-day's fly, and I wish you would call on him and take his opinion in general: you know his taste is a standard. He will return here again in a week or two; so, please do not miss asking for him. One thing I hope he will do, persuade you to adopt my favourite, *Craigie-burn-wood*, in your selection: It is as great a favourite of his as of mine. The lady on whom it was made is one of the finest women in Scotland; and, in fact, (*entre nous*) is in a manner to me what Sterne's Eliza was to him—a mistress, a friend, or what you will, in the guileless simplicity of Platonic love. (Now don't put any of your squinting constructions on this, or have any clishmaclaiver about it among our acquaintances.) I assure you that to my lovely friend you are indebted for many of your best songs of mine. Do you think that the sober gin-horse routine of existence, could inspire a man with life, and love, and joy—could fire him with enthusiasm, or melt him with pathos, equal to the genius of your book? —No! no!—Whenever I want to be more than ordinary *in song:* to be in some degree equal to your diviner airs—do you imagine I fast and pray for the celestial emanation? *Tout au contraire!* I have a glorious recipe; the very one that for his own use was invented by the divinity of healing and poetry, when erst he piped to the flocks of Admetus. I put myself in a regimen of admiring a fine woman; and in proportion to the adorability of her charms, in proportion you are delighted with my verses. The lightning of her eye is the godhead of Parnassus, and the witchery of her smile the divinity of Helicon!

To descend to business; if you like my idea of, *When she cam ben she bobbit*, the following stanzas of mine, altered a little from what they were formerly when set to another air, may perhaps do instead of worse stanzas.

SAW YE MY PHELY.

(*Quasi dicat Phillis.*)

Tune—"When she came ben she bobbit."

O saw ye my dear, my Phely?
O saw ye my dear, my Phely?
She's down i' the grove, wi' a new love,
She winna come hame to her Willie.

What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
What says she, my dearest, my Phely?
She lets thee to wit that she has thee forgot,
And for ever disowns thee her Willie.

O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
O had I ne'er seen thee, my Phely!
As light as the air, and fause as thou's fair,
Thou's broken the heart o' thy Willie.

. . . . . .

Now for a few miscellaneous remarks. The *Posie* (in the Museum), is my composition: the air was taken down from Mrs. Burns' voice. It is well known in the West Country, but the old words are trash. By the bye, take a look at the tune again, and tell me if you do not think it is the original from which *Roslin Castle* is composed. The second part, in particular, for the first two or three bars, is exactly the old air. *Strathallan's Lament* is mine; the music is by our right-trusty and deservedly well-beloved, Allan Masterton. *Donocht-head*, is not mine: I would give ten pounds it were. It appeared first in the Edin-

burgh Herald; and came to the Editor of that paper with the Newcastle post-mark on it.* *Whistle o'er the lave o't* is mine; the music said to be by a John Bruce, a celebrated violin player in Dumfries, about the beginning of this century. This I know, Bruce, who was an honest man, though a red-wud Highlandman, constantly claimed it; and by all the old musical people here, is believed to be the author of it.

Andrew and his cutty gun. The song to which this is set in the Museum, is mine; and was composed on Miss Euphemia Murray, of Lintrose, commonly and deservedly called the Flower of Strathmore.

How long and dreary is the night. I met with some such words in a collection of songs somewhere, which I altered and enlarged; and to please you, and to suit your favourite air, I have taken a stride or two across my room, and have arranged it anew, as you will find on the other page.

(*How long and dreary is the night, p.* 205.)

Tell me how you like this. I differ from your idea of the expression of the tune. There is, to me, a great deal of tenderness in it. You cannot, in my opinion, dispense with a bass to your addenda airs. A lady of my acquaintance, a noted performer, plays and sings at the same time so charmingly, that I shall never bear to see any of her songs sent into the world as naked as Mr. What-d'ye-call-um has done in his London collection.†

These English songs gravel me to death. I have not that command of the language that I have of my native tongue. I have been at *Duncan Gray*, to dress it in English, but all I can do is deplorably stupid. For instance:

(*Let not woman e'er complain, p.* 209.)

Since the above, I have been out in the country taking a dinner with a friend, where I met with the lady whom I mentioned in the second page in this odds-and-ends of a letter. As usual, I got *into song;* and returning home, I composed the following.

(*Sleep'st thou, or wak'st thou, fairest creature, p.* 235.)

If you honour my verses by setting the air to them, I will vamp up the old song, and make it English enough to be understood.

I enclose you a musical curiosity, an East Indian air, which you would swear was a Scottish one. I know the authenticity of it, as the gentleman who brought it over is a particular acquaintance of mine. Do preserve me the copy I send you, as it is the only one I have. Clarke has set a bass to it, and I intend putting it into the Musical Museum. Here follow the verses I intend for it.

(*The auld man, p.* 225.)

I would be obliged to you if you would procure me a sight of Ritson's collection of English songs, which you mention in your letter. I will thank you for another information, and that as speedily as you please: whether this miserable drawling hotch-potch epistle has not completely tired you of my correspondence?

No. LXI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

Edinburgh, 27th October, 1794.

I AM sensible, my dear friend, that a genuine poet can no more exist without his mistress than his meat. I wish I knew the adorable she, whose bright eyes and witching smiles have so often enraptured the Scottish bard! that I might drink her sweet health when the toast is going round. *Craigie-burn-wood,* must certainly be adopted into my family, since *she* is the object of the song; but in the name of decency, I must beg a new chorus verse from you. *O to be lying beyond thee, dearie,* is perhaps a consummation to be wished, but will not do for singing in the company of ladies. The songs in your last will do you lasting credit, and suit the respective airs charmingly. I am perfectly of your opinion with respect to the additional airs. The idea of sending them into the world naked as they were born was ungenerous. They must all be clothed and made decent by our friend Clarke.

I find I am anticipated by the friendly Cunningham, in sending your Ritson's Scottish collection. Permit me, therefore, to present you with his English collection, which you will receive by the coach. I do not find his historical essay on Scottish song interesting. Your anecdotes and miscellaneous remarks will, I am sure, be much more so. Allan has just sketched a charming design from *Maggie Lauder.* She is dancing with such spirit as to electrify the piper, who seems almost dancing too, while he is playing with the most exquisite glee.

I am much inclined to get a small copy, and to have it engraved in the style of Ritson's prints.

P. S.—Pray, what do your anecdotes say concerning *Maggie Lauder?* was she a real personage, and of what rank? You would surely *spier for her if you ca'd at Anstruther town.*

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* The reader will be curious to see this poem so highly praised by Burns. See p. 151.

† Mr. Ritson.

No. LXII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

November, 1794.

MANY thanks to you, my dear Sir, for your present: it is a book of the utmost importance to me. I have yesterday begun my anecdotes, &c. for your work. I intend drawing it up in the form of a letter to you, which will save me from the tedious dull business of systematic arrangement. Indeed, as all I have to say consists of unconnected remarks, anecdotes, scraps of old songs, &c. it would be impossible to give the work a beginning, a middle, and an end; which the critics insist to be absolutely necessary in a work. In my last, I told you my objections to the song you had selected for *My lodging is on the cold ground*. On my visit the other day to my fair Chloris, (that is the poetic name of the lovely goddess of my inspiration), she suggested an idea, which I, in my return from the visit, wrought into the following song:—

. . . . . .

(*Chloris, p.* 197.)

How do you like the simplicity and tenderness of this pastoral? I think it pretty well.

I like you for entering so candidly and so kindly into the story of *Ma chere Amie*. I assure you, I was never more in earnest in my life, than in the account of that affair which I sent you in my last. Conjugal love is a passion which I deeply feel and highly venerate; but, somehow, it does not make such a figure in poesy as that other species of the passion,

"Where Love is liberty, and Nature law."

Musically speaking, the first is an instrument of which the gamut is scanty and confined, but the tones inexpressibly sweet; while the last has powers equal to all the intellectual modulations of the human soul. Still, I am a very poet in my enthusiasm of the passion. The welfare and happiness of the beloved object is the first and inviolate sentiment that pervades my soul; and whatever pleasures I might wish for, or whatever might be the raptures they would give me, yet, if they interfere with that first principle, it is having these pleasures at a dishonest price; and justice forbids, and generosity disdains the purchase!

Despairing of my own powers to give you variety enough in English songs, I have been turning over old collections, to pick out songs of which the measure is something similar to what I want; and with a little alteration, so as to suit the rhyme of the air exactly, to give you them for your work. Where the songs have hitherto been but little noticed, nor have ever been set to music, I think the shift a fair one. A song, which, under the same first verse, you will find in Ramsay's Tea-Table Miscellany, I have cut down for an English dress to your *Dainty Davie*, as follows:—

(*Chloe, p.* 196.)

You may think meanly of this, but take a look at the bombast original, and you will be surprised that I have made so much of it. I have finished my song to *Rothemurche's Rant;* and you have Clarke to consult, as to the set of the air for singing.

(*Lassie wi' the lint-white locks, p.* 208.)

This piece has at least the merit of being a regular pastoral: the vernal morn, the summer noon, the autumnal evening, and the winter night, are regularly rounded. If you like it, well: if not, I will insert it in the Museum.

I am out of temper that you should set so sweet, so tender an air, as *Deil tak the wars*, to the foolish old verses. You talk of the silliness of *Saw ye my father;* by heavens, the odds is, gold to brass! Besides, the old song, though now pretty well modernized into the Scottish language, is originally, and in the early editions, a bungling low imitation of the Scottish manner, by that genius Tom D'Urfey; so has no pretensions to be a Scottish production. There is a pretty English song by Sheridan in the *Duenna*, to this air, which is out of sight superior to D'Urfey's. It begins,

"When sable night each drooping plant restoring."

The air, if I understand the expression of it properly, is the very native language of simplicity, tenderness, and love. I have again gone over my song to the tune as follows.*

Now for my English song to *Nancy's to the Greenwood*, &c.

. . . . . .

(*Maria's Dwelling, p.* 260.)

There is an air, *The Caledonian Hunt's delight*, to which I wrote a song that you wil find in Johnson. *Ye banks and braes o' bonnie Doon;* this air, I think, might find a place among your hundred, as Lear says of his knights. Do you know the history of the air? It is curious enough. A good many years ago, Mr. James Miller, writer in your good town, a gentleman whom possibly you know, was in company with our friend Clarke; and talking of Scottish music, Miller expressed an ardent ambition to be able to compose a Scots air. Mr.

* See the song in its first and best dress in p. 175.

Clarke, partly by way of joke, told him to keep to the black keys of the harpsichord, and preserve some kind of rhyme; and he would infallibly compose a Scots air. Certain it is that, in a few days, Mr. Miller produced the rudiments of an air, which Mr. Clarke, with some touches and corrections, fashioned into the tune in question. Ritson, you know, has the same story of the *Black Keys;* but this account which I have just given you, Mr. Clarke informed me of, several years ago. Now to shew you how difficult it is to trace the origin of our airs, I have heard it repeatedly asserted that this was an Irish air; nay, I met with an Irish gentleman who affirmed he had heard it in Ireland among the old women; while, on the other hand, a Countess informed me, that the first person who introduced the air into this country, was a baronet's lady of her acquaintance, who took down the notes from an itinerant piper in the Isle of Man. How difficult then to ascertain the truth respecting our poesy and music! I, myself, have lately seen a couple of ballads sung through the streets of Dumfries, with my name at the head of them as the author, though it was the first time I had ever seen them.

I thank you for admitting *Craigie-burnwood;* and I shall take care to furnish you with a new chorus. In fact, the chorus was not my work, but a part of some old verses to the air. If I can catch myself in a more than ordinarily propitious moment, I shall write a new *Craigieburn-wood* altogether. My heart is much in the theme.

I am ashamed, my dear fellow, to make the request; 'tis dunning your generosity; but in a moment, when I had forgotten whether I was rich or poor, I promised Chloris a copy of your songs. It wrings my honest pride to write you this; but an ungracious request is doubly so by a tedious apology. To make you some amends, as soon as I have extracted the necessary information out of them, I will return you Ritson's volumes.

The lady is not a little proud that she is to make so distinguished a figure in your collection, and I am not a little proud that I have it in my power to please her so much. Lucky it is for your patience that my paper is done, for when I am in a scribbling humour, I know not when to give over.

No. LXIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY GOOD SIR, 15*th November*, 1794.

SINCE receiving your last, I have had another interview with Mr. Clarke, and a long consultation. He thinks the *Caledonian Hunt* is more Bacchanalian than amorous in its nature, and recommends it to you to match the air accordingly. Pray did it ever occur to you how peculiarly well the Scottish airs are adapted for verses in the form of a dialogue? The first part of the air is generally low, and suited for a man's voice, and the second part in many instances cannot be sung, at concert pitch, but by a female voice. A song thus performed makes an agreeable variety, but few of ours are written in this form: I wish you would think of it in some of those that remain. The only one of the kind you have sent me, is admirable, and will be an universal favourite.

Your verses for *Rothemurche* are so sweetly pastoral, and your serenade to Chloris, for *Deil tak the wars,* so passionately tender, that I have sung myself into raptures with them. Your song for *My lodging is on the cold ground,* is likewise a diamond of the first water; I am quite dazzled and delighted by it. Some of your Chlorises I suppose have flaxen hair, from your partiality for this colour; else we differ about it; for I should scarcely conceive a woman to be a beauty, on reading that she had lint-white locks!

Farewell thou stream that winding flows, I think excellent, but it is much too serious to come after *Nancy:* at least it would seem an incongruity to provide the same air with merry Scottish and melancholy English verses! The more that the two sets of verses resemble each other in their general character, the better. Those you have manufactured for *Dainty Davie,* will answer charmingly. I am happy to find you have begun your anecdotes: I care not how long they be, for it is impossible that any thing from your pen can be tedious. Let me beseech you not to use ceremony in telling me when you wish to present any of your friends with the songs: the next carrier will bring you three copies, and you are as welcome to twenty as to a pinch of snuff.

No. LXIV.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

19*th November*, 1794.

YOU see, my dear Sir, what a punctual correspondent I am; though indeed you may thank yourself for the *tedium* of my letters, as you have so flattered me on my horsemanship with my favourite hobby, and have praised the grace of his ambling so much, that I am scarcely ever off his back. For instance, this morning, though a keen blowing frost, in my walk before breakfast, I finished my duet which you were pleased to praise so much. Whether I have uniformly succeeded, I will not say; but here it is for you, though it is not an hour old.

(*O Philly, happy be that day, p.* 220.)

Tell me honestly how you like it; and point out whatever you think faulty.

I am much pleased with your idea of singing our songs in alternate stanzas, and regret that you did not hint it to me sooner. In those that remain, I shall have it in my eye. I remember your objections to the name Philly; but it is the common abbreviation of Phillis. Sally, the only other name that suits, has, to my ear, a vulgarity about it, which unfits it for any thing except burlesque. The legion of Scottish poetasters of the day, whom your brother editor, Mr. Ritson, ranks with me, as my coevals, have always mistaken vulgarity for simplicity; whereas, simplicity is as much *eloignée* from vulgarity on the one hand, as from affected point and puerile, conceit on the other.

I agree with you as to the air, *Craigie-burnwood*, that a chorus would in some degree spoil the effect, and shall certainly have none in my projected song to it. It is not however a case in point with *Rothiemurchie;* there, as in *Roy's Wife of Aldivalloch*, a chorus goes, to my taste, well enough. As to the chorus going first, that is the case with *Roy's Wife*, as well as *Rothiemurchie*. In fact, in the first part of both tunes, the rhyme is so peculiar and irregular, and on that irregularity depends so much of their beauty, that we must e'en take them with all their wildness, and humour the verse accordingly. Leaving out the starting note, in both tunes, has, I think, an effect that no regularity could counterbalance the want of.

Try { O Roy's wife of Aldivalloch.
O lassie wi' the lint-white locks.

and

Compare with { Roy's wife of Aldivalloch.
Lassie wi' the lint-white locks.

Does not the tameness of the prefixed syllable strike you? In the last case, with the true furor of genius, you strike at once into the wild originality of the air; whereas in the first insipid method, it is like the grating screw of the pins before the fiddle is brought into tune. This is my taste; if I am wrong, I beg pardon of the *cognoscenti*.

The Caledonian Hunt is so charming, that it would make any subject in a song go down; but pathos is certainly its native tongue. Scottish Bacchanalians we certainly want, though the few we have are excellent. For instance, *Todlin hame* is, for wit and humour, an unparalleled composition; and *Andrew and his cutty gun* is the work of a master. By the way, are you not quite vexed to think that those men of genius, for such they certainly were, who composed our fine Scottish lyrics, should be unknown! It has given me many a heart-ache. Apropos to Bacchanalian songs in Scottish; I composed one yesterday for an air I like much—*Lumps o' pud ding.*

(*Contented wi' little, and cantie wi' mair, p.* 197.)

Since yesterday's penmanship, I have framed a couple of English Stanzas, by way of an English song to *Roy's wife*. You will allow me that in this instance, my English corresponds in sentiment with the Scottish.

(*Canst thou leave me thus, my Katy? p.* 196.)

Well! I think this, to be done in two or three turns across my room, and with two or three pinches of Irish Blackguard, is not so far amiss. You see I am determined to have my quantum of applause from somebody.

Tell my friend Allan (for I am sure that we only want the trifling circumstance of being known to one another, to be the best friends on earth), that I much suspect he has, in his plates, mistaken the figure of the stock and horn. I have, at last, gotten one; but it is a very rude instrument. It is composed of three parts; the stock, which is the hinder thigh-bone of a sheep, such as you see in a mutton-ham; the horn, which is a common Highland cow's horn, cut off at the smaller end, until the aperture be large enough to admit the stock to be pushed up through the horn, until it be held by the thicker end of the thigh-bone; and lastly, an oaten reed exactly cut and notched like that which you see every shepherd-boy have, when the corn stems are green and full-grown. The reed is not made fast in the bone, but is held by the lips, and plays loose in the smaller end of the stock; while the stock, with the horn hanging on its larger end, is held by the hands in playing. The stock has six or seven ventiges on the upper side, and one back-ventige, like the common flute. This of mine was made by a man from the braes of Athole, and is exactly what the shepherds wont to use in that country.

However, either it is not quite properly bored in the holes, or else we have not the art of blowing it rightly; for we can make little of it. If Mr. Allan chooses, I will send him a sight of mine; as I look on myself to be a kind of brother-brush with him. "Pride in Poets is nae sin," and, I will say it, that I look on Mr. Allan and Mr. Burns to be the only genuine and real painters of Scottish costume in the world.

No. LXV.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

28th November, 1794.

I ACKNOWLEDGE, my dear Sir, you are not only the most punctual, but the most delectable correspondent I ever met with. To attempt flattering you never entered my head; the truth is, I look back with surprise at my impudence,

in so frequently nibbling at lines and couplets of your incomparable lyrics, for which, perhaps, if you had served me right, you would have sent me to the devil. On the contrary, however, you have all along condescended to invite my criticism with so much courtesy, that it ceases to be wonderful, if I have sometimes given myself the airs of a reviewer. Your last budget demands unqualified praise: all the songs are charming, but the duet is a *chief d'œuvre*. *Lumps of pudding* shall certainly make one of my family dishes; you have cooked it so capitally, that it will please all palates. Do give us a few more of this cast, when you find yourself in good spirits: these convivial songs are more wanted than those of the amorous kind, of which we have great choice. Besides, one does not often meet with a singer capable of giving the proper effect to the latter, while the former are easily sung, and acceptable to every body. I participate in your regret that the authors of some of our best songs are unknown; it is provoking to every admirer of genius.

I mean to have a picture painted from your beautiful ballad, *The Soldier's return*, to be engraved for one of my frontispieces. The most interesting point of time appears to me, when she first recognizes her ain dear Willy, "She gaz'd, she redden'd like a rose." The three lines immediately following, are no doubt more impressive on the reader's feelings; but were the painter to fix on these, then you'll observe the animation and anxiety of her countenance is gone, and he could only represent her fainting in the soldier's arms. But I submit the matter to you, and beg your opinion.

Allan desires me to thank you for your accurate description of the stock and horn, and for the very gratifying compliment you pay him in considering him worthy of standing in a niche by the side of Burns in the Scottish Pantheon. He has seen the rude instrument you describe, so does not want you to send it; but wishes to know whether you believe it to have ever been generally used as a musical pipe by the Scottish shepherds, and when, and in what part of the country chiefly. I doubt much if it was capable of any thing but routing and roaring. A friend of mine says, he remembers to have heard one in his younger days (made of wood instead of your bone), and that the sound was abominable.

Do not, I beseech you, return any books.

No. LXVI.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

December, 1794.

It is, I assure you, the pride of my heart to do any thing to forward, or add to the value of your book: and as I agree with you that the Jacobite song, in the Museum, to *There'll never be peace till Jamie comes hame*, would not so well consort with Peter Pindar's excellent love-song to that air, I have just framed for you the following:

(*My Nannie's awa, p.* 212.)

How does this please you? As to the point of time for the expression, in your proposed print from my *Sodger's return*: It must certainly be at—"She gazed." The interesting dubiety and suspense, taking possession of her countenance; and the gushing fondness, with a mixture of roguish playfulness in his, strike me, as things of which a master will make a great deal. In great haste, but in great truth, yours.

No. LXVII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

January, 1795.

I FEAR for my songs: however, a few may please, yet originality is a coy feature in composition, and in a multiplicity of efforts in the same style, disappears altogether. For these three thousand years, we poetic folks have been describing the spring, for instance; and as the spring continues the same, there must soon be a sameness in the imagery, &c. of these said rhyming folks.

A great critic, Aiken on songs, says, that love and wine are the exclusive themes for song writing. The following is on neither subject, and consequently is no song; but will be allowed, I think, to be two or three pretty good prose thoughts, inverted into rhyme.

(*A man's a man for a' that, p.* 67.)

I do not give you the foregoing song for your book, but merely by way of *vive la bagatelle*; for the piece is not really poetry. How will the following do for *Craigie-burn-wood*?

(*Sweet fa's the eve on Craigie-burn, p.* 224.)

Farewell! God bless you.

No. LXVIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh*, 30*th Jan.* 1795.

I THANK you heartily for *Nannie's awa*, as well as for *Craigie-burn*, which I think a very comely pair. Your observation on the difficul-

ty of original writing in a number of efforts, in the same style, strikes me very forcibly; and it has again and again excited my wonder to find you continually surmounting this difficulty, in the many delightful songs you have sent me. Your *vive la bagatelle* song, *For a' that*, shall undoubtedly be included in my list.

No. LXIX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

February, 1795.

HERE is another trial at your favourite air.

(*O let me in this ae night, and Answer*, p. 217.)

I do not know whether it will do.

No. LXX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Ecclefechan, 7th Feb. 1795.

MY DEAR THOMSON,

YOU cannot have any idea of the predicament in which I write to you. In the course of my duty as supervisor (in which capacity I have acted of late) I came yesternight to this unfortunate, wicked, little village. I have gone forward, but snows of ten feet deep have impeded my progress: I have tried to "gae back the gate I cam again," but the same obstacle has shut me up within insuperable bars. To add to my misfortune, since dinner, a scraper has been torturing catgut, in sounds that would have insulted the dying agonies of a sow, under the hands of a butcher, and thinks himself, on that very account, exceeding good company. In fact, I have been in a dilemma, either to get drunk, to forget these miseries; or to hang myself, to get rid of them: like a prudent man, (a character congenial to my every thought, word, and deed), I, of two evils have chosen the least, and am very drunk, at your service![*]

I wrote you yesterday from Dumfries. I had not time then to tell you all I wanted to say; and heaven knows, at present, I have not capacity.

Do you know an air—I am sure you must know it, *We'll gang nae mair to yon town*: I think, in slowish time, it would make an excellent song. I am highly delighted with it; and if you should think it worthy of your attention, I have a fair dame in my eye to whom I would consecrate it.

As I am just going to bed, I wish you a good night.

No. LXXI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

25th February, 1795.

I HAVE to thank you, my dear Sir, for two epistles, one containing *Let me in this ae night*; and the other from Ecclefechan, proving, that drunk or sober, your "mind is never muddy." You have displayed great address in the above song. Her answer is excellent, and at the same time takes away the indelicacy that otherwise would have attached to his entreaties. I like the song as it now stands very much.

I had hopes you would be arrested some days at Ecclefechan, and be obliged to beguile the tedious forenoons by song making. It will give me pleasure to receive the verses you intend for, *O wat ye wha's in yon town?*

No. LXXII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

May, 1795.

(*The Woodlark*, p. 237.)

Let me know your very first leisure how you like this song.

(*Long, long the night*, p. 207.)

How do you like the foregoing? The Irish air, *Humours of Glen*, is a great favourite of mine, and as, except the silly stuff in the *Poor Soldier*, there are not any decent verses for it, I have written for it as follows:—

(*Their groves o' sweet myrtle let foreign lands reckon*, p. 195.)

('*Twas na her bonnie blue e'e was my ruin*, p. 237.)

Let me hear from you.

No. LXXIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

YOU must not think, my good Sir, that I have any intention to enhance the value of my

[*] The bard must have been tipsy indeed, to abuse sweet Ecclefechan at this rate.

gift, when I say, in justice to the ingenious and worthy artist, that the design and execution of *The Cotter's Saturday Night* is, in my opinion, one of the happiest productions of Allan's pencil. I shall be grievously disappointed if you are not quite pleased with it.

The figure intended for your portrait, I think strikingly like you, as far as I can remember your phiz. This should make the piece interesting to your family every way. Tell me whether Mrs. Burns finds you out among the figures.

I cannot express the feeling of admiration with which I have read your pathetic *Address to the Woodlark*, your elegant *Panegyric on Caledonia*, and your affecting verses on *Chloris' illness*. Every repeated perusal of these gives new delight. The other song to *Laddie lie near me*, though not equal to these, is very pleasing.

No. LXXIV.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

(*How cruel are the parents*, p. 204.)
(*Mark yonder pomp of costly fashion*, p. 211.)

Well! this is not amiss. You see how I answer your orders: your tailor could not be more punctual. I am just now in a high fit of poetizing, provided that the strait-jacket of criticism don't cure me. If you can in a post or two administer a little of the intoxicating potion of your applause, it will raise your humble servant's phrenzy to any height you want. I am at this moment "holding high converse" with the Muses, and have not a word to throw away on such a prosaic dog as you are.

No. LXXV.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

May, 1795.

Ten thousand thanks for your elegant present; though I am ashamed of the value of it, being bestowed on a man who has not by any means merited such an instance of kindness. I have shown it to two or three judges of the first abilities here, and they all agree with me in classing it as a first-rate production. My phiz is "sae kenspeckle," that the very joiner's apprentice whom Mrs. Burns employed to break up the parcel (I was out of town that day) knew it at once. My most grateful compliments to Allan, who has honoured my rustic muse so much with his masterly pencil. One strange coincidence is, that the little one who is making the felonious attempt on the cat's tail, is the most striking likeness of an "ill-deedie, d—n'd, wee, rumble-garie, urchin" of mine, whom, from that propensity to witty wickedness and manfu' mischief, which, even at twa days auld, I foresaw would form the striking features of his disposition, I named Willie Nicoll, after a certain friend of mine, who is one of the masters of a grammar-school in a city which shall be nameless.

Give the enclosed epigram to my much-valued friend Cunningham, and tell him that on Wednesday I go to visit a friend of his, to whom his friendly partiality in speaking of me, in a manner introduced me—I mean a well known military and literary character, Colonel Dirom.

You do not tell me how you liked my two last songs. Are they condemned?

No. LXXVI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

13th May, 1795.

It gives me great pleasure to find that you are all so well satisfied with Mr. Allan's production. The chance resemblance of your little fellow, whose promising disposition appeared so *very* early, and suggested whom he should be named after, is curious enough. I am acquainted with that person, who is a prodigy of learning and genius, and a pleasant fellow, though no saint.

You really make me blush when you tell me you have not merited the drawing from me. I do not think I can ever repay you, or sufficiently esteem and respect you for the liberal and kind manner in which you have entered into the spirit of my undertaking, which could not have been perfected without you: So I beg you would not make a fool of me again, by speaking of obligation.

I like your two last songs very much, and am happy to find you are in such a high fit of poetizing. Long may it last. Clarke has made a fine pathetic air to Mallet's superlative ballad of *William and Margaret*, and is to give it to me, to be enrolled among the elect.

No. LXXVII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

In *Whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad*, the iteration of that line is tiresome to my ear. Here goes what I think is an improvement:

O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
O whistle, and I'll come to ye, my lad;
Tho' father, and mother, and a' should gae mad,
Thy Jeany will venture wi' ye, my lad.

In fact, a fair dame at whose shrine I, the Priest of the Nine, offer up the incense of Parnassus; a dame whom the Graces have attired in witchcraft, and whom the Loves have armed with lightning, a Fair One, herself the heroine of the song, insists on the amendment; and dispute her commands if you dare!

(*O this is no my ain lassie, p.* 238.)

Do you know that you have roused the torpidity of Clarke at last? He has requested me to write three or four songs for him, which he is to set to music himself. The enclosed sheet contains two songs for him, which please to present to my valued friend Cunningham.

I enclose the sheet open, both for your inspection, and that you may copy the song, *O bonnie was yon rosie brier.* I do not know whether I am right; but that song pleases me, and as it is extremely probable that Clarke's newly roused celestial spark will soon be smothered in the fogs of indolence, if you like the song, it may go as Scottish verses, to the air of, *I wish my love was in a mire;* and poor Erskine's English lines may follow.

I enclose you *For a' that and a' that*, which was never in print: it is a much superior song to mine. I have been told that it was composed by a lady.

. . . . . .

(*Now Spring has clad the grove in green, p.* 214.)
(*O bonnie was yon rosy brier, p.* 216.)

Written on the blank leaf of a copy of the last edition of my poems, presented to the lady, whom, in so many fictitious reveries of passion, but with the most ardent sentiments of real friendship, I have so often sung under the name of Chloris:

'Tis Friendship's pledge, my young, fair friend,
Nor thou the gift refuse,
Nor with unwilling ear attend
The moralizing muse.

Since thou, in all thy youth and charms,
Must bid the world adieu,
(A world 'gainst peace in constant arms)
To join the friendly few.

Since thy gay morn of life o'ercast,
Chill came the tempest's lour;
(And ne'er misfortune's eastern blast
Did nip a fairer flower).

Since life's gay scenes must charm no more,
Still much is left behind;
Still nobler wealth hast thou in store,
The comforts of the mind!

Thine is the self-approving glow,
On conscious honour's part;
And, dearest gift of heaven below,
Thine friendship's truest heart.

The joys refined of sense and taste,
With every muse to rove;
And doubly were the poet blest
These joys could he improve.

. . . . . .

Une bagatelle de l'amitie.

No. LXXVIII.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY DEAR SIR, *Edinburgh, 3d Aug.* 1795.

THIS will be delivered to you by a Dr. Brianton, who has read your works, and pants for the honour of your acquaintance. I do not know the gentleman, but his friend, who applied to me for this introduction, being an excellent young man, I have no doubt he is worthy of all acceptation.

My eyes have just been gladdened, and my mind feasted, with your last packet—full of pleasant things indeed. What an imagination is yours! It is superfluous to tell you that I am delighted with all the three songs, as well as with your elegant and tender verses to Chloris.

I am sorry you should be induced to alter *O whistle and I'll come to ye, my lad*, to the prosaic line, *Thy Jeany, will venture wi' ye my lad.* I must be permitted to say, that I do not think the latter either reads or sings so well as the former. I wish, therefore, you would in my name petition the charming Jeany, whoever she be, to let the line remain unaltered.*

I should be happy to see Mr. Clarke produce a few airs to be joined to your verses. Every body regrets his writing so very little, as every body acknowledges his ability to write well. Pray, was the resolution formed coolly before dinner, or was it a midnight vow made over a bowl of punch with the bard?

I shall not fail to give Mr. Cunningham what you have sent him.

P. S.—The lady's *For a' that and a' that* is sensible enough, but no more to be compared to yours than I to Hercules.

---

* The Editor, who has heard the heroine of this song sing it herself in the very spirit of arch simplicity that it requires, thinks Mr. Thomson's petition unreasonable.—CURRIE.

No. LXXIX.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

ENGLISH SONG.

Tune—" Let me in this ae night."

FORLORN, my love, no comfort near,
Far, far from thee, I wander here ;
Far, far from thee, the fate severe
At which I most repine, love.

O wert thou, love, but near me,
But near, near, near me ;
How kindly thou wouldst cheer me,
And mingle sighs with mine, love.

Around me scowls a wintry sky,
That blasts each bud of hope and joy ;
And shelter, shade, nor home have I,
Save in these arms of thine, love.
O wert, &c.

Cold, alter'd friendship's cruel part,
To poison fortune's ruthless dart—
Let me not break thy faithful heart,
And say that fate is mine, love.
O wert, &c.

But dreary tho' the moments fleet,
O let me think we yet shall meet !
That only ray of solace sweet
Can on thy Chloris shine, love.
O wert, &c.

How do you like the foregoing ? I have written it within this hour : so much for the *speed* of my Pegasus ; but what say you to his *bottom ?*

No. LXXX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

(*Last May a braw wooer cam down the lang glen, p.* 206.)

FRAGMENT.

Tune—" The Caledonian Hunt's delight."

Why, why tell thy lover,
Bliss he never must enjoy ;
Why, why undeceive him,
And give all his hopes the lie.
O why, while fancy, raptured, slumbers,
Chloris, Chloris all the theme,
Why, why wouldst thou, cruel,
Wake thy lover from his dream.

. . . . . .

Such is the peculiarity of the rhyme of this air, that I find it impossible to make another stanza to suit it.

I am at present quite occupied with the charming sensations of the toothache, so have not a word to spare.

No. LXXXI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

MY DEAR SIR, *3d June*, 1795.

YOUR English verses to *Let me in this ae night*, are tender and beautiful ; and your ballad to the " Lothian lassie" is a master-piece for its humour and naiveté. The fragment for the *Caledonian Hunt* is quite suited to the original measure of the air, and, as it plagues you so, the fragment must content it. I would rather, as I said before, have had Bacchanalian words, had it so pleased the poet ; but, nevertheless, for what we have received, Lord make us thankful !

No. LXXXII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

5th Feb. 1796.

O Robby Burns are ye sleeping yet ?
Or are ye wauking, I would wit ?

THE pause you have made, my dear Sir, is awful ! Am I never to hear from you again ? I know and I lament how much you have been afflicted of late, but I trust that returning health and spirits will now enable you to resume the pen, and delight us with your musings. I have still about a dozen Scotch and Irish airs that I wish " married to immortal verse." We have several true born Irishmen on the Scottish list ; but they are now naturalized, and reckoned our own good subjects. Indeed we have none better. I believe I before told you that I have been much urged by some friends to publish a collection of all our favourite airs and songs in octavo, embellished with a number of etchings by our ingenious friend Allan ; what is your opinion of this ?

No. LXXXIII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

February, 1796.

MANY thanks, my dear Sir, for your handsome, elegant present to Mrs. B——, and for

my remaining vol. of P. Piudar.—Peter is a delightful fellow, and a first favourite of mine. I am much pleased with your idea of publishing a collection of our songs in octavo with etchings. I am extremely willing to lend every assistance in my power. The Irish airs I shall cheerfully undertake the task of finding verses for.

I have already, you know, equipt three with words, and the other day I strung up a kind of rhapsody to another Hibernian melody, which I admire much.

(*Hey for a lass wi' a tocher, p.* 238.)

If this will do, you have now four of my Irish engagement. In my by-past songs, I dislike one thing; the name Chloris—I meant it as the fictitious name of a certain lady; but, on second thoughts, it is a high incongruity to have a Greek appellation to a Scottish pastoral ballad.—Of this, and some things else, in my next: I have more amendments to propose.—What you once mentioned of "flaxen locks" is just: they cannot enter into an *elegant* description of beauty. Of this also again—God bless you!*

No. LXXXIV.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET.

Your *Hey for a lass wi' a tocher*, is a most excellent song, and with you the subject is something new indeed. It is the first time I have seen you debasing the god of soft desire, into an amateur of acres and guineas.—

I am happy to find you approve of my proposed octavo edition. Allan has designed and etched about twenty plates, and I am to have my choice of them for that work. Independently of the Hogarthian humour with which they abound, they exhibit the character and costume of the Scottish peasantry with inimitable felicity. In this respect, he himself says, they will far exceed the aquatinta plates he did for the Gentle Shepherd, because in the etching he sees clearly what he is doing, but not so with the aquatinta, which he could not manage to his mind.

The Dutch boors of Ostade are scarcely more characteristic and natural than the Scottish figures in those etchings.

* Our Poet never explained what name he would have substituted for Chloris.—*Note by Mr. Thomson.*

No. LXXXV.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

April, 1796.

Alas, my dear Thomson, I fear it will be some time ere I tune my lyre again! "By Babel streams I have sat and wept," almost ever since I wrote you last: I have only known existence by the pressure of the heavy hand of sickness, and have counted time by the repercussions of pain! Rheumatism, cold, and fever have formed to me a terrible combination. I close my eyes in misery, and open them without hope. I look on the vernal day, and say, with poor Ferguson—

"Say wherefore has an all-indulgent Heaven
"Light to the comfortless and wretched given?"

This will be delivered to you by a Mrs. Hyslop, landlady of the Globe Tavern here, which for these many years has been my *howff*, and where our friend Clarke and I have had many a merry squeeze. I am highly delighted with Mr. Allan's etchings. *Woo'd and married and a'* is admirable! The *grouping* is beyond all praise. The expression of the figures, conformable to the story in the ballad, is absolutely faultless perfection. I next admire *Turnimspike*. What I like least is, *Jenny said to Jocky*. Besides the female being in her appearance · · · · · if you take her stooping into the account, she is at least two inches taller than her lover. Poor Cleghorn! I sincerely sympathize with him! Happy I am to think that he yet has a well-grounded hope of health and enjoyment in this world. As for me—but that is a · · · · · subject!

No LXXXVI.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET

4th May, 1796.

I need not tell you, my good Sir, what concern the receipt of your last gave me, and how much I sympathize in your sufferings. But do not, I beseech you, give yourself up to despondency, nor speak the language of despair. The vigour of your constitution I trust will soon set you on your feet again; and then it is to be hoped you will see the wisdom and the necessity of taking due care of a life so valuable to your family, to your friends, and to the world.

Trusting that your next will bring agreeable accounts of your convalescence, and returning good spirits, I remain, with sincere regard yours.

P. S. Mrs. Hyslop I doubt not delivered the gold seal to you in good condition.

No. LXXXVII.

THE POET TO MR. THOMSON.

MY DEAR SIR,

I ONCE mentioned to you an air which I have long admired—*Here's a health to them that's awa, hiney,* but I forget if you took any notice of it. I have just been trying to suit it with verses; and I beg leave to recommend the air to your attention once more. I have only begun it.

. . . . . .

(*Here's a health to ane I lo'e dear, p.* 204.)

No. LXXXVIII.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THIS will be delivered by a Mr. Lewars, a young fellow of uncommon merit. As he will be a day or two in town, you will have leisure, if you choose, to write me by him; and if you have a spare half hour to spend with him, I shall place your kindness to my account. I have no copies of the songs I have sent you, and I have taken a fancy to review them all, and possibly may mend some of them; so when you have complete leisure, I will thank you for either the originals, or copies.* I had rather be the author of five well-written songs than of ten otherwise. I have great hopes that the genial influence of the approaching summer will set me to rights, but as yet I cannot boast of returning health. I have now reason to believe that my complaint is a flying gout: a sad business!

Do let me know how Cleghorn is, and remember me to him.

This should have been delivered to you a month ago. I am still very poorly, but should like much to hear from you.

No. LXXXIX.

THE SAME TO THE SAME.

Brow, on the Solway-frith, 12th July, 1796.

AFTER all my boasted independence, curst necessity compels me to implore you for five pounds. A cruel . . . . . of a haberdasher, to whom I owe an account, taking it into his head that I am dying, has commenced a process, and will infallably put me into jail. Do, for God's sake, send me that sum, and that by return of post. Forgive me this earnestness, but the horrors of a jail have made me half distracted. I do not ask all this gratuitously; for, upon returning health, I hereby promise and engage to furnish you with five pounds worth of the neatest song genius you have seen. I tried my hand on "Rothiemurchie" this morning. The measure is so difficult, that it is impossible to infuse much genius into the lines; they are on the other side. Forgive, forgive me!

(*Fairest maid on Devon Banks, p.* 200.)

* It is needless to say, that this revisal Burns did not live to perform.

No. XC.

MR. THOMSON TO THE POET

MY DEAR SIR, *14th July,* 1796.

EVER since I received your melancholy letter by Mrs. Hyslop, I have been ruminating in what manner I could endeavour to alleviate your sufferings. Again and again I thought of a pecuniary offer, but the recollection of one of your letters on this subject, and the fear of offending your independent spirit, checked my resolution. I thank you heartily, therefore, for the frankness of your letter of the 12th, and with great pleasure enclose a draft for the very sum I proposed sending. Would I were the Chancellor of the Exchequer but for one day, for your sake.

Pray, my good Sir, is it not possible for you to muster a volume of poetry? If too much trouble to you in the present state of your health, some literary friend might be found here, who would select and arrange from your manuscripts, and take upon him the task of Editor. In the meantime it could be advertised to be published by subscription. Do not shun this mode of obtaining the value of your labour; remember Pope published the Iliad by subscription. Think of this, my dear Burns, and do not reckon me intrusive with my advice. You are too well convinced of the respect and friendship I bear you, to impute any thing I say to an unworthy motive. Yours faithfully.

The verses to "Rothiemurchie" will answer finely. I am happy to see you can still tune your lyre.

GLOSSARY.

THE *ch* and *gh* have always the guttural sound. The sound of the English diphthong *oo*, is commonly spelled *ou*. The French *u*, a sound which often occurs in the Scottish language, is marked *oo*, or *ui*. The *a* in genuine Scottish words, except when forming a diphthong, or followed by an *e* mute after a single consonant, sounds generally like the broad English *a* in *wall*. The Scottish diphthong *æ*, always, and *ea*, very often, sound like the French *e* masculine. The Scottish diphthong *ey*, sounds like the Latin *ei*.

A

A', All
Aback, away, aloot
Abeigh, at a shy distance
Aboon, above, up
Abread, abroad, in sight
Abreed, in breadth
Addle, putrid water, &c.
Ae, one.
Aff, off: Aff loof, unpremeditated
Afore, before
Aft, oft
Aften, often
Agley, off the right line; wrong
Ablins, perhaps
Ain, own
Airle-penny, Airles, earnest money
Airn, iron
Aith, an oath
Aits, oats
Aiver, an old horse
Aizle, a hot cinder
Alake, alas
Alane, alone
Akwart, awkward
Amaist, almost
Amang, among
An', and; if
Ance, once
Ane, one; and
Anent, over against
Anither, another
Ase, ashes
Asklent, asquint; aslant
Asteer, abroad; stirring
Athart, athwart
Aught, possession; as, In a' my aught, in all my possession
Auld lang syne, olden time, days of other years
Auld, old
Auldfarran, or, auld farrant, sagacious, cunning, prudent
Ava, at all
Awa', away
Awfu', awful
Awn, the beard of barley, oats, &c.
Awnie, bearded
Ayont, beyond

B

BA', ball
Backets, ash boards
Backlins, coming; coming back, returning
Back, returning
Bad, did bid
Baide, endured, did stay
Baggie, the belly
Bainie, having large bones, stout
Bairn, a child
Bairntime, a family of children, a brood
Baith, both
Ban, to swear
Bane, bone
Bang, to beat; to strive
Bardie, diminutive of bard
Barefit, barefooted
Barmie, of, or like barm
Batch, a crew, a gang
Batts, bots
Baudrons, a cat
Bauld, bold
Bawk, bank
Baws'nt, having a white stripe down the face
Be, to let be; to give over; to cease
Bear, barley
Beastie, diminutive of beast
Beet, to add fuel to fire
Beld, bald
Belyve, by and by
Ben, into the spence or parlour; a spence
Benlomond, a noted mountain in Dumbartonshire
Bethankit, grace after meat
Beuk, a book
Bicker, a kind of wooden dish; a short race

Bie, or Bield, shelter
Bien, wealthy, plentiful
Big, to build
Biggin, building; a house
Biggit, built
Bill, a bull
Billie, a brother; a young fellow
Bing, a heap of grain, potatoes, &c.
Birk, birch
Birken-shaw, Birchen-wood-shaw, a small wood.
Birkie, a clever fellow
Birring, the noise of partridges, &c. when they spring
Bit, crisis, nick of time
Bizz, a bustle, to buzz
Blastie, a shrivelled dwarf; a term of contempt
Blastit, blasted
Blate, bashful, sheepish
Blather, bladder
Bladd, a flat piece of any thing; to slap
Blaw, to blow, to boast
Bleerit, bleared, sore with rheum
Bleerit and blin', bleared and blind
Bleezing, blazing
Blellum, an idle talking fellow
Blether, to talk idly; nonsense
Bleth'rin', talking idly
Blink, a little while; a smiling look; to look kindly; to shine by fits
Blinker, a term of contempt
Blinkin, smirking
Blue-gown, one of those beggars who get annually, on the king's birth-day, a blue cloak or gown, with a badge
Bluid, blood
Bluntie, a sniveller, a stupid person
Blype, a shred, a large piece
Bock, to vomit, to gush intermittently
Bocked, gushed, vomited
Bodle, a small gold coin
Bogles, spirits, hobgoblins
Bonnie or bonny, handsome, beautiful
Bonnock, a kind of thick cake of bread, a small jannock, or loaf made of oat meal
Boord, a board
Boortree, the shrub elder; planted much of old in hedges of barn-yards, &c.
Boost, behaved, must needs
Bore, a hole in the wall
Botch, an angry tumour
Bousing, drinking
Bow-kail, cabbage
Bowt, bended, crooked
Brackens, fern
Brae, a declivity; a precipiece; the slope of a hill
Braid, broad
Braindg't, reeled forward
Braik, a kind of harrow
Braindge, to run rashly forward
Brak, broke, made insolvent
Branks, a kind of wooden curb for horses
Brash, a sudden illness
Brats, coarse clothes, rags, &c.
Brattle, a short race; hurry; fury
Braw, fine, handsome
Brawly, or brawlie, very well! finely; heartily
Braxie, a morbid sheep
Breastie, diminutive of breast
Breastit, did spring up or forward
Breckan, fern
Breef, an invulnerable or irresistible spell
Breeks, breeches
Brent, smooth
Brewin', brewing
Brie, juice, liquid
Brig, a bridge
Brunstane, brimstone
Brisket, the breast, the bosom
Brither, a brother
Brock, a badger
Brogue, a hum; a trick
Broo, broth; a trick
Broose, broth; a race at country weddings, who shall first reach the bridegrooms's house on returning from church
Browster-wives, ale-house wives
Brugh, a burgh
Bruilzie, a broil, a combustion
Brunt, did burn, burnt
Brust, to burst; burst
Buchan-bullers, the boiling of the sea among the rocks of Buchan
Buckskin, an inhabitant of Virginia
Bught, a pen
Bughtin-time, the time of collecting the sheep in the pens to be milked
Buirdly, stout made; broad made
Bum-clock, a humming beetle that flies in the summer evenings
Bumming, humming as bees
Bummle, to blunder
Bummler, a blunderer
Bunker, a window-seat
Burdies, diminutive of birds
Bure, did bear
Burn, water, a rivulet
Burnewin, i. e. burn the wind, a blacksmith
Burnie, diminutive of burn
Buskie, bushy
Buskit, dressed
Busks, dresses
Bussle, a bustle; to bustle
Buss, shelter
But, bot, with; without
But an' ben, the country kitchen and parlour
By himsel, lunatic, distracted
Byke, a bee-hive
Byre, a cow-stable; a sheep-pen

C

CA', to call, to name; to drive
Ca't, or ca'd, called, driven; calved
Cadger, a carrier
Cadie, or Caddie, a person; a young fellow
Caff, chaff
Caird, a tinker
Cairn, a loose heap of stones
Calf-ward, a small enclosure for calves
Callan, a boy
Caller, fresh; sound; refreshing
Canie, or cannie, gentle, mild; dexterous
Cannilie, dexterously; gently
Cantie, or canty, cheerful, merry
Cantrip, a charm, a spell
Cape-stane, cope-stone; key-stone.
Careerin, cheerfully
Carl, an old man
Carlin, a stout old woman
Cartes, cards
Caudron, a cauldron
Cauk an' keel, chalk and red clay

Cauld, cold
Caup, a wooden drinking vessel.
Cesses, taxes
Chanter, a part of a bagpipe
Chap, a person, a fellow; a blow
Chaup, a stroke, a blow
Cheekit, cheeked
Cheep, a chirp; to chirp
Chiel, or cheel, a young fellow
Chimla, or chimlie, a fire-grate, a fire-place
Chimla-lug, the fireside
Chittering, shivering, trembling
Chockin', choking
Chow, to chew; Cheek for chow, side by side
Chuffie, fat-faced
Clachan, a small village about a church; a hamlet
Claise, or claes, clothes
Claith, cloth
Claithing, clothing
Claivers, nonsense; not speaking sense
Clap, clapper of a mill
Clarkit, wrote
Clash, an idle tale, the story of the day
Clatter, to tell idle stories; an idle story
Claught, snatched at, laid hold of
Claut, to clean; to scrape
Clauted, scraped
Clavers, idle stories.
Claw, to scratch
Cleed, to clothe
Cleeds, clothes
Cleekit, having caught
Clinkin, jerking; clinking
Clinkumbell, he who rings the church-bell
Clips, shears
Clishmaclaver, idle conversation
Clock, to hatch; a beetle
Clockin, hatching
Cloot, the hoof of a cow, sheep, &c.
Clootie, an old name for the Devil.
Clour, a bump or swelling after a blow
Cluds, clouds
Coaxin, wheedling
Coble, a fishing boat
Cockernony, a lock of hair tied upon a girl's head; a cap
Coft, bought
Cog, a wooden dish
Coggie, diminutive of cog
Coila, from Kyle, a district of Ayrshire; so called, saith tradition, from Coil, or Coilus, a Pictish monarch
Collie, a general and sometimes a particular name for country curs
Collieshangie, quarrelling, an uproar
Commaun, command
Cood, the cud
Coof, a blockhead; a ninny
Cookit, appeared and disappeared by fits
Coost, did cast
Coot, the ankle or foot
Cootie, a wooden kitchen dish:—also, those fowls whose legs are clad with feathers are said to be cootie
Corbies, a species of the crow
Core, corps; party; clan
Corn't, fed with oats
Cotter, the inhabitant of a cot-house, or cottager
Couthie, kind, loving

Cove, a cave
Cowe, to terrify; to keep under, to lop; fright; a branch of furze, broom, &c.
Cowp, to barter; to tumble over; a gang
Cowpit, tumbled
Cowrin', cowering
Cowt, a colt
Cozie, snug
Cozily, snugly
Crabbit, crabbed, fretful
Crack, conversation; to converse
Crackin', conversing
Craft, or croft, a field near a house (in old husbandry)
Craiks, cries or calls incessantly; a bird
Crambo-clink, or crambo-jingle, rhymes, doggrel verses
Crank, the noise of an ungreased wheel
Crankous, fretful, captious
Cranreuch, the hoar frost
Crap, a crop; to crop
Craw, a crow of a cock; a rook
Creel, a basket; to have one's wits in a creel, to be crazed; to be fascinated
Creepie-stool, the same as cutty-stool
Creeshie, greasy
Crood, or croud, to coo as a dove
Croon, a hollow and continued moan; to make a noise like the continued roar of a bull; to hum a tune
Crooning, humming
Crouchie, crook-backed
Croose, cheerful; courageous
Crousely, cheerfully; courageously
Crowdie, a composition of oat-meal and boiled water, sometimes from the broth of beef, mutton, &c.
Crowdie-time, breakfast time
Crowlin', crawling
Crummock, a cow with crooked horns
Crump, hard and brittle; spoken of bread
Crunt, a blow on the head with a cudgel
Cuif, a blockhead, a ninny
Cummock, a short staff with a crooked head
Curchie, a courtesy
Curler, a player at a game on the ice, practised in Scotland, called curling
Curlie, curled, whose hair falls naturally in ringlets
Curling, a well known game on the ice
Curmurring, murmuring; a slight rumbling noise
Curpin, the crupper
Cushat, the dove, or wood-pigeon
Cutty, short; a spoon broken in the middle
Cutty-stool, the stool of repentance

D

DADDIE, a father
Daffin, merriment; foolishness
Daft, merry, giddy; foolish
Daimen, rare, now and then; daimen-icker, an ear of corn now and then.
Dainty, pleasant, good humoured, agreeable
Daise, daez, to stupify
Dales, plains, valleys
Darklins, darkling
Daud, to thrash, to abuse
Daur, to dare
Daurt, dared

Daurg, or daurk, a day's labour
Davoc, David
Dawd, a large piece
Dawtit, or dawtet, fondled, caressed
Dearies, diminutive of dears
Dearthfu', dear
Deave, to deafen
Deil-ma-care ! no matter ! for all that !
Deleerit, delirious
Descrive, to describe
Dight, to wipe ; to clean corn from chaff
Dight, cleaned from chaff
Ding, to worst, to push
Dink, neat, tidy, trim
Dinna, do not
Dirl, a slight tremulous stroke or pain
Dizen, or dizz'n, a dozen
Doited, stupified, hebetated
Dolt, stupified, crazed
Donsie, unlucky
Dool, sorrow ; to sing dool, to lament, to mourn
Doos, doves
Dorty, saucy, nice
Douce, or douse, sober, wise, prudent
Doucely, soberly, prudently
Dought, was or were able
Doup, backside
Doup-skelper, one that strikes the tail
Dour and din, sullen and shallow
Doure, stout, durable ; sullen, stubborn
Dow, am or are able, can
Dowff, pithless, wanting force
Dowie, worn with grief, fatigue, &c. half asleep
Downa, am or are not able, cannot
Doylt, stupid
Dozent, stupified, impotent
Drap, a drop ; to drop
Draigle, to soil by trailing, to draggle among wet, &c.
Drapping, dropping.
Draunting, drawling ; of a slow enunciation
Dreep, to ooze, to drop
Dreigh, tedious, long about it
Dribble, drizzling ; slaver
Drift, a drove
Droddum, the breech
Drone, part of a bagpipe
Droop-rumpl't, that droops at the crupper
Droukit, wet
Drounting, drawling
Drouth, thirst, drought
Drucken, drunken
Drumly, muddy
Drummock, meal and water mixed in a raw state
Drunt, pet, sour humour
Dub, a small pond
Duds, rags, clothes
Duddie, ragged
Dung, worsted ; pushed, driven
Dunted, beaten, boxed
Dush, to push as a ram, &c.
Dusht, pushed by a ram, ox, &c.

E

E'E, the eye
E'en, the eyes
E'ening, evening
Eerie, frighted, dreading spirits
Eild, old age
Elbuck, the elbow
Eldritch, ghastly, frightful
Eller, an elder, or church officer
En', end
Enbrugh, Edinburgh.
Eneugh, enough
Especial, especially
Ettle, to try, to attempt
Eydent, diligent

F

FA', fall ; lot ; to fall
Fa's does fall ; water-falls
Faddom't, fathomed
Fae, a foe
Feam, foam
Faiket, unknown
Fairin', a fairing ; a present
Fallow, fellow
Fand, did find
Farl, a cake of oaten bread, &c.
Fash, trouble, care ; to trouble, to care for
Fasht, troubled
Fasteren-e'en, Fasten's Even
Fauld, a fold ; to fold
Faulding, folding
Faut, fault
Faute, want, lack
Fawsont, decent, seemly
Feal, a field ; smooth
Fearfu', frightful
Feart, frighted
Feat, neat, spruce
Fecht, to fight
Fechtin', fighting
Feck, many, plenty
Fecket, an under waistcoat with sleeves
Feckfu', large, brawny, stout
Feckless, puny, weak, silly
Feckly, weakly
Feg, a fig
Feide, feud, enmity
Feirrie, stout, vigorous, healthy
Fell, keen, biting ; the flesh immediately under the skin ; a field pretty level, on the side or top of a hill
Fen, successful struggle ; fight
Fend, to live comfortably
Ferlie, or ferley, to wonder ; a wonder ; a term of contempt
Fetch, to pull by fits
Fetch't, pulled intermittently
Fidge, to fidget
Fiel, soft, smooth
Fient, fiend, a petty oath
Fier, sound, healthy ; a brother : a friend
Fissle, to make a rustling noise ; to fidget ; a bustle
Fit, a foot
Fittie-lan', the nearer horse of the hindmost pair in the plough
Fizz, to make a hissing noise, like fermentation
Flainen, flannel
Fleech, to supplicate in a flattering manner
Fleech'd, supplicated
Fleechin', supplicating
Fleesh, a fleece

Fleg, a kick, a random stroke
Flether, to decoy by fair words
Fletherin', flattering
Fley, to scare, to frighten
Flitcher, to flutter, as young nestlings when their dam approaches
Flinders, shreds, broken pieces, splinters
Flingin'-tree, a piece of timber hung by way of partition between two horses in a stable; a flail
Flisk, to fret at the yoke
Flisket, fretted
Flitter, to vibrate like the wings of small birds
Flittering, fluttering, vibrating
Flunkie, a servant in livery
Fodgel, squat and plump
Foord, a ford
Forbears, forefathers
Forbye, besides
Forfairn, distressed; worn out, jaded
Forfoughten, fatigued
Forgather, to meet, to encounter with
Forgie, to forgive
Forjesket, jaded with fatigue
Fother, fodder
Fou, full; drunk
Foughten, troubled, harassed
Fouth, plenty, enough, or more than enough
Fow, a bushel, &c.; also a pitch-fork
Frae, from; off
Frammit, strange, estranged from, at enmity with
Freath, froth
Frien', friend
Fu', full
Fud, the scut, or tail of the hare, cony, &c.
Fuff, to blow intermittently
Fuff't, did blow
Funnie, full of merriment
Fur, a furrow
Furm, a form, bench
Fyke, trifling cares; to piddle, to be in a fuss about trifles
Fyle, to soil, to dirty
Fyl't, soiled, dirtied

G

GAB, the mouth; to speak boldly, or pertly
Gaberlunzie, an old man
Gadsman, a ploughboy, the boy that drives the horses in the plough
Gae, to go; gaed, went; gaen, or gane, gone; gaun, going
Gaet, or gate, way, manner; road
Gairs, triangular pieces of cloth sewed on the bottom of a gown, &c.
Gang, to go, to walk
Gar, to make, to force to
Gar't, forced to
Garten, a garter
Gash, wise, sagacious; talkative; to converse
Gashin', conversing
Gaucy, jolly, large
Gaud, a plough
Gear, riches; goods of any kind
Geck, to toss the head in wantonness or scorn
Ged, a pike
Gentles, great folks, gentry
Genty, elegantly formed, neat
Geordie, a guinea
Get, a child, a young one
Ghaist, a ghost
Gie, to give; gied, gave; gien, given
Giftie, diminutive of gift
Giglets, playful girls
Gillie, diminutive of gill
Gilpey, a half grown, half informed boy or girl, a romping lad, a hoiden
Gimmer, a ewe from one to two years old
Gin, if; against
Gipsey, a young girl
Girn, to grin, to twist the features in rage, agony, &c.
Girning, grinning
Gizz, a periwig
Glaiket, inattentive, foolish
Glaive, a sword
Gawky, half-witted, foolish, romping
Glaizie, glittering; smooth like glass
Glaum, to snatch greedily
Glaum'd, aimed, snatched
Gleck, sharp, ready
Gleg, sharp, ready
Gleib, glebe
Glen, a dale, a deep valley
Gley, a squint; to squint; a-gley, off at a side, wrong
Glib-gabbet, smooth and ready in speech
Glint, to peep
Glinted, peeped
Glintin', peeping
Gloamin', the twilight
Glowr, to stare, to look; a stare, a look
Glowred, looked, stared
Glunsh, a frown, a sour look
Goavan, looking round with a strange, inquiring gaze; staring stupidly
Gowan, the flower of the wild daisy, hawkweed, &c.
Gowany, daisied, abounding with daisies
Gowd, gold
Gowff, the game of golf; to strike as the bat does the ball at golf
Gowff'd, struck
Gowk, a cuckoo; a term of contempt
Gowl, to howl
Grane, or grain, a groan; to groan
Grain'd and grunted, groaned and grunted
Graining, groaning
Graip, a pronged instrument used for cleaning stables
Graith, accoutrements, furniture, dress, gear
Grannie, grandmother
Grape, to grope
Grapit, groped
Grat, wept, shed tears
Great, intimate, familiar
Gree, to agree; to bear the gree, to be decidedly victor
Gree't, agreed
Greet, to shed tears, to weep
Greetin', crying, weeping
Grippet, catched, seized
Groat, to get the whistle of one's groat, to play a losing game
Grousome, loathsomely grim
Grozet, a gooseberry
Grumph, a grunt; to grunt
Grumphie, a sow
Grun', ground
Grunstane, a grindstone
Gruntle, the phiz; a grunting noise

Grunzie, mouth
Grushie, thick; of thriving growth
Gude, the Supreme Being; good
Guid, good
Guid-mornin', good morrow
Guid-e'en, good evening
Guidman and guidwife, the master and mistress of the house; young guidman, a man newly married
Guid-willie, liberal; cordial
Guidfather, guidmother, father-in-law, and mother-in-law
Gully, or gullie, a large knife
Gumlie, muddy
Gusty, tasteful

H

HA', hall
Ha'-Bible, the great bible that lies in the hall
Hae, to have
Haen, had, the participle
Haet, fint haet, a petty oath of negation; nothing
Haffet, the temple, the side of the head
Hafflins, nearly half, partly
Hag, a scar, or gulf in mosses, and moors
Haggis, a kind of pudding boiled in the stomach of a cow or sheep
Hain, to spare, to save
Hain'd, spared
Hairst, harvest
Haith, a petty oath
Haivers, nonsense, speaking without thought
Hal', or hald, an abiding place
Hale, whole, tight, healthy
Haly, holy
Hame, home
Hallun, a particular partition-wall in a cottage, or more properly a seat of turf at the outside
Hallowmas, Hallow-eve, the 31st of October
Hamely, homely, affable
Han', or haun', hand
Hap, an outer garment, mantle, plaid, &c. to wrap, to cover; to hop
Happer, a hopper
Happin', hopping
Hap step an' loup, hop skip and leap
Harkit, hearkened
Harn, very coarse linen
Hash, a fellow that neither knows how to dress nor act with propriety
Hastit, hastened
Haud, to hold
Haughs, low lying, rich lands; valleys
Haurl, to drag; to peel
Haurlin, peeling
Haverel, a half witted person; half witted
Havins, good manners, decorum, good sense
Hawkie, a cow, properly one with a white face
Heapit, heaped
Healsome, healthful, wholesome
Hearse, hoarse
Hear't, hear it
Heather, heath
Hech! oh! strange!
Hecht, promised; to foretell something that is to be got or given; foretold; the thing foretold; offered
Heckle, a board, in which are fixed a number of sharp pins, used in dressing hemp, flax, &c.
Heeze, to elevate, to raise
Helm, the rudder or helm
Herd, to tend flocks; one who tends flocks
Herrin, a herring
Herry, to plunder; most properly to plunder birds' nests
Herryment, plundering, devastation
Hersel, herself; also a herd of cattle, of any sort
Het, hot
Heugh, a crag, a coalpit
Hilch, a hobble; to halt
Hilchin, halting
Himsel, himself
Hiney, honey
Hing, to hang
Hirple, to walk crazily, to creep
Hirsel, so many cattle as one person can attend
Hastie, dry; chapped; barren
Hitch, a loop, a knot
Hizzie, a hussy, a young girl
Hoddin, the motion of a sage countryman riding on a cart-horse; humble
Hog-score, a kind of distance-line, in curling, drawn across the rink
Hog-shouther, a kind of horse-play, by justling with the shoulder; to justle
Hool, outer skin or case, a nut-shell; a peascod
Hoolie, slowly, leisurely
Hoolie! take leisure, stop
Hoord, a hoard; to hoard
Hoordit, hoarded
Horn, a spoon made of horn
Hornie, one of the many names of the devil
Host, or hoast, to cough; a cough
Hostin', coughing
Hosts, coughs
Hotch'd, turn'd topsyturvy; blended, mixed
Houghmagandie, fornication
Houlet, an owl
Housie, diminutive of house
Hove, to heave, to swell
Hoved, heaved, swelled
Howdie, a midwife
Howe, hollow; a hollow or dell
Howebackit, sunk in the back, spoken of a horse, &c.
Howff, a tippling house; a house of resort
Howk, to dig
Howkit, digged
Howkin, digging
Howlet, an owl
Hoy, to urge
Hoy't, urged
Hoyse, to pull upwards
Hoyte, to amble crazily
Hughoc, diminutive of Hugh
Hurcheon, a hedgehog
Hurdies, the loins: the crupper
Hushion, a cushion

I

I', in
Icker, an ear of corn
Ier-oe, a great-grandchild
Ilk, or ilka, each, every
Ill-willie, ill-natured, malicious, niggardly
Ingine, genius, ingenuity

Ingle, fire ; fire-place
Ise, I shall or will
Ither, other ; one another

J

JAD, jade ; also a familiar term among country folks for a giddy young girl
Jauk, to dally, to trifle
Jaukin', trifling, dallying
Jaup, a jerk of water ; to jerk as agitated water.
Jaw, coarse raillery ; to pour out ; to shut, to jerk as water
Jerkinet, a jerkin, or short grown
Jillet, a jilt, a giddy girl
Jimp, to jump ; slender in the waist ; handsome
Jimps, easy stays
Jink, to dodge, to turn a corner ; a sudden turning ; a corner
Jinker, that turns quickly ; a gay sprightly girl ; a wag
Jinkin', dodging
Jirk, a jerk
Jocteleg, a kind of knife
Jouk, to stoop, to bow the head
Jow, to jow, a verb which includes both the swinging motion and pealing sound of a large bell
Jundie, to justle

K

KAE, a daw
Kail, colewort ; a kind of broth
Kail-runt, the stem of colewort
Kain, fowls, &c. paid as rent by a farmer
Kebbuck, a cheese
Keckle, to giggle ; to titter
Keek, a peep, to peep
Kelpies, a sort of mischievous spirits, said to haunt fords and ferries at night, especially in storms
Ken, to know ; kend or kenn'd, knew
Kennin, a small matter
Kenspeckle, well known, easily known
Ket, matted, hairy ; a fleece of wool
Kilt, to truss up the clothes
Kimmer, a young girl, a gossip
Kin, kindred ; kin', kind, *adj.*
King's-hood, a certain part of the entrails of an ox, &c.
Kintra, country
Kintra cooser, country stallion
Kirn, the harvest supper ; a churn
Kirsen, to christen, or baptize
Kist, a chest ; a shop counter
Kitchen, any thing that eats with bread ; to serve for soup, gravy, &c.
Kith, kindred
Kittle, to tickle ; ticklish ; lively, apt
Kittlin, a young cat
Kiuttle, to cuddle
Kiuttlin, cuddling
Knaggie, like knags, or points of rocks
Knap, to strike smartly, a smart blow
Knappin-hammer, a hammer used for breaking stones
Knowe, a small round hillock
Knurl, a dwarf
Kye, cows
Kyle, a district in Ayrshire
Kyte, the belly
Kythe, to discover ; to show one's self

L

LADDIE, diminutive of lad
Laggen, the angle between the side and bottom of a wooden dish
Laigh, low
Lairing, wading, and sinking in snow, mud, &c.
Laith, loath
Laithfu', bashful, sheepish
Lallans, the Scottish dialect of the English language
Lambie, diminutive of lamb
Lampit, a kind of shell-fish, a limpit
Lan', land ; estate
Lane, lone ; my lane, thy lane, &c. myself alone, &c.
Lanely, lonely
Lang, long ; to think lang, to long, to weary
Lap, did leap
Lave, the rest, the remainder, the others
Laverock, the lark
Lawin, shot, reckoning, bill
Lawlan', lowland
Lea'e, to leave
Leal, loyal, true, faithful
Lea-rig, grassy ridge
Lear, (pronounced lare), learning
Lee-lang, live-long
Leesome, pleasant
Leeze-me, a phrase of congratulatory endearment ; I am happy in thee, or proud of thee
Leister, a three-prong'd dart for striking fish
Leugh, did laugh
Leuk, a look ; to look
Libbet, gelded
Lift, the sky
Lightly, sneeringly ; to sneer at
Lilt, a ballad ; a tune ; to sing
Limmer, a kept mistress, a strumpet
Limp't, limped, hobbled
Link, to trip along
Linkin', tripping
Linn, a waterfall ; a precipiece
Lint, flax
Lint i' the bell, flax in flower
Lintwhite, a linnet
Loan, or loanin', the place of milking
Loof, the palm of the hand
Loot, did let
Looves, plural of loof
Loun, a fellow, a ragamuffin ; a woman of easy virtue
Loup, jump, leap
Lowe, a flame
Lowin', flaming
Lowrie, abbreviation of Lawrence
Lowse, to loose
Lows'd, loosed
Lug, the ear ; a handle
Lugget, having a handle
Luggie, a small wooden dish with a handle
Lum, the chimney
Lunch, a large piece of cheese, flesh, &c.
Lunt, a column of smoke ; to smoke
Luntin', smoking
Lyart, of a mixed colour, gray

M

MAE, more
Mair, more
Maist, most, almost
Maistly, mostly
Mak, to make
Makin', making
Mailen, a farm
Mallie, Molly
Mang, among
Manse, the parsonage house, where the minister lives
Manteele, a mantle
Mark, marks. (This and several other nouns which in English require an s to form the plural, are in Scotch, like the words sheep, deer, the same in both numbers.)
Marled, variegated; spotted
Mar's year, the year 1715
Mashlum, meslin, mixed corn
Mask, to mash, as malt, &c.
Maskin-pat, a tea-pot
Maud, maad, a plaid worn by shepherds, &c.
Maukin, a hare
Maun, must
Mavis, the thrush
Maw, to mow
Mawin', mowing
Meere, a mare
Meikle, meickle, much
Melancholious, mournful
Melder, corn, or grain of any kind, sent to the mill to be ground
Mell, to meddle. Also a mallet for pounding barley in a stone trough
Melvie, to soil with meal
Men', to mend
Mense, good manners, decorum
Menseless, ill-bred, rude, impudent
Messin, a small dog
Midden, a dunghill
Midden-hole, a gutter at the bottom of a dunghill
Mim, prim, affectedly meck
Min', mind; resemblance
Mind't, mind it; resolved, intending
Minnie, mother, dam
Mirk, mirkest, dark, darkest
Misca', to abuse, to call names
Misca'd, abused
Mislear'd, mischievous, unmannerly
Misteuk, mistook
Mither, a mother
Mixtie-maxtie, confusedly mixed
Moistify, to moisten
Mony, or monie, many
Mools, dust, earth, the earth of the grave; to rake i' the mools; to lay in the dust
Moop, to nibble as a sheep
Moorlan', of or belonging to moors
Morn, the next day, to-morrow
Mou, the mouth
Moudiwort, a mole
Mousie, diminutive of mouse
Muckle, or mickle, great, big, much
Musie, diminutive of muse
Muslin-kail, broth, composed simply of water, shelled barley, and greens
Mutchkin, an English pint
Mysel, myself

N

NA, no, not, nor
Nae, no, not any
Naething, or naithing, nothing
Naig, a horse
Nane, none
Nappy, ale; to be tipsy
Negleckit, neglected
Neuk, a nook
Niest, next
Nieve, the fist
Nievefu', handful
Niffer, an exchange; to exchange, to barter
Niger, a negro
Nine-tail'd-cat, a hangman's whip
Nit, a nut
Norland, of or belonging to the north
Notic't, noticed
Nowte, black cattle

O

O', of
Ochils, name of a range of mountains in Clackmannon and Kinross-shires
O haith, O faith! an oath
Ony, or onie, any
Or, is often used for ere, before
Ora, or orra, supernumerary, that can be spared
O't, of it
Ourie, shivering; drooping
Oursel', or oursels, ourselves
Outlers, cattle not housed
Owre, over; too
Owre-hip, a way of fetching a blow with the hammer over the arm

P

PACK, intimate, familiar; twelve stone of wool
Painch, paunch
Paitrick, a partridge
Pang, to cram
Parle, speech
Parritch, an oatmeal pudding, a well-known Scotch dish
Pat, did put; a pot
Pattle, or pettle, a plough-staff
Paughty, proud, haughty
Pauky, or pawkie, cunning, sly
Pay't, paid; beat
Pech, to fetch the breath short, as in an asthma
Pechan, the crop, the stomach
Peelin', peeling, the rind of fruit
Pet, a domesticated sheep, &c.
Pettle, to cherish; a plough-staff
Philabegs, short petticoats worn by the Highlandmen
Phraise, fair speeches, flattery; to flatter
Phraisin', flattery
Pibroch, Highland war music adapted to the bagpipe
Pickle, a small quantity
Pine, pain, uneasiness
Pit, to put
Placard, public proclamation

Plack, an old Scotch coin, the third part of a Scotch penny, twelve of which make an English penny
Plackless, pennyless, without money
Platie, diminutive of plate
Plew, or pleugh, a plough
Pliskie, a trick
Poind, to seize cattle or goods for rent, as the laws of Scotland allow
Poortith, poverty
Pou, to pull
Pouk, to pluck
Poussie, a hare, or cat
Pout, a poult, a chick
Pou't, did pull
Powthery, like powder
Pow, the head, the skull
Pownie, a little horse
Powther, or pouther, powder
Preen, a pin
Prent, to print; print
Prie, to taste
Prie'd, tasted
Prief, proof
Prig, to cheapen; to dispute
Priggin, cheapening
Primsie, demure, precise
Propone, to lay down, to propose
Provoses, provosts
Puddock-stool, a musheroom, fungus
Pund, pound; pounds
Pyle,—a pyle o' caff, a single grain of chaff

Q

QUAT, to quit
Quak, to quake
Quey, a cow from one to two years old

R

RAGWEED, the herb ragwort
Raible, to rattle nonsense
Rair, to roar
Raize, to madden, to inflame
Ram-feezl'd, fatigued; overspread
Ram-stam, thoughtless, forward
Raploch, properly a coarse cloth; but used as an adnoun for coarse
Rarely, excellently, very well
Rash, a rush; rash-buss, a bush of rushes
Ratton, a rat
Raucle, rash; stout; fearless
Raught, reached
Raw, a row
Rax, to stretch
Ream, cream; to cream
Reaming, brimful, frothing
Reave, rove
Reck, to heed
Rede, counsel; to counsel
Rod-wat-shod, walking in blood over the shoe-tops
Red-wud, stark mad
Ree, half drunk, fuddled
Reek, smoke
Reekin', smoking
Reekit, smoked; smoky
Remead, remedy
Requite, requited
Rest, to stand restive
Restit, stood restive; stunted; withered
Restricked, restricted
Rew, to repent, to compassionate
Rief, reef, plenty
Rief randies, sturdy beggars
Rig, a ridge
Rigwiddie, rigwoodie, the rope or chain that crosses the saddle of a horse to support the spokes of a cart; spare, withered, sapless
Rin, to run, to melt
Rinnin', running
Rink, the course of the stones; a term in curling on ice
Rip, a handful of unthrashed corn
Riskit, made a noise like the tearing of roots
Rockin', spinning on the rock, or distaff
Rood, stands likewise for the plural roods
Roon, a shred, a border or selvage
Roose, to praise, to commend
Roosty, rusty
Roun', round, in the circle of neighbourhood
Roupet, hoarse, as with a cold
Routhie, plentiful
Row, to roll, to wrap
Row't, rolled, wrapped
Rowte, to low, to bellow
Routh, or routh, plenty
Rowtin', lowing
Rozet, rosin
Rung, a cudgel
Runkled, wrinkled
Runt, the stem of colewort or cabbage
Ruth, a woman's name; the book so called; sorrow
Ryke, to reach

S

SAE, so
Saft, soft
Sair, to serve; a sore
Sairly, or sairlie, sorely
Sair't, served
Sark, a shirt; a shift
Sarkit, provided in shirts
Saugh, the willow
Saul, soul
Saumont, salmon
Saunt, a saint
Saut, salt, *adj.* salt
Saw, to sow
Sawin', sowing
Sax, six
Scaith, to damage, to injure; injury
Scar, a cliff
Scaud, to scald
Scauld, to scold
Scaur, apt to be scared
Scawl, a scold; a termagant
Scon, a cake of bread
Sconner, a loathing; to loathe
Scraich, to scream as a hen, partridge, &c.
Screed, to tear; a rent
Scrieve, to glide swiftly along
Scrievin, gleesomely; swiftly
Scrimp, to scant
Scrimpet, did scant; scanty
See'd, did see
Seizin', seizing
Sel, self; a body's sel, one's self alone
Sell't, did sell
Sen', to send
Sent', I, &c. sent, or did send it; send it

Servan', servant
Settlin', settling; to get a settlin', to be frighted into quietness
Sets, sets off, goes away
Shachled, distorted; shapeless
Shaird, a shred, a shard
Shangan, a stick cleft at one end for putting the tail of a dog, &c. into, by way of mischief, or to frighten him away
Shaver, a humorous wag; a barber
Shaw, to show; a small wood in a hollow
Sheen, bright, shining
Sheep-shank; to think one's self nae sheep-shank, to be conceited
Sherra-moor, sheriff-moor, the famous battle fought in the rebellion, A.D. 1715
Sheugh, a ditch, a trench, a sluice
Shiel, a ditch, a trench, a sluice
Shiel, a shed
Shill, shrill
Shog, a shock; a push off at one side
Shool, a shovel
Shoon, shoes
Shore, to offer, to threaten
Shor'd, offered
Shouther, the shoulder
Shure, did shear, shore
Sic, such
Sicker, sure, steady
Sidelins, sidelong, slanting
Siller, silver; money
Simmer, summer
Sin, a son
Sin', since
Skaith, see scaith
Skellum, a worthless fellow
Skelp, to strike, to slap; to walk with a smart tripping step; a smart stroke
Skelpie-limmer, a reproachful term in female scolding
Skelpin', stepping, walking
Skiegh, or skeigh, proud, nice, highmettled
Skinklin, a small portion
Skirl, to shriek, to cry shrilly
Skirling, shrieking, crying
Skirl't, shrieked
Sklent, slant; to run aslant, to deviate from truth
Sklented, ran, or hit, in an oblique direction
Skouth, freedom to converse without restraint; range, scope
Skriegh, a scream; to scream
Skyrin', shining; making a groat show
Skyte, force, very forcible motion
Slae, a sloe
Slade, did slide
Slap, a gate; a breach in a fence
Slaver, saliva; to emit saliva
Slaw, slow
Slee, sly; sleest, sliest
Sleekit, sleek; sly
Sliddry, slippery
Slype, to fall over, as a wet furrow from the plough
Slypet, fell
Sma', small
Smeddum, dust, powder; mettle, sense
Smiddy, a smithy
Smoor, to smother
Smoor'd, smothered
Smoutie, smutty, obscene, ugly
Smytrie, a numerous collection of small individuals
Snapper, to stumble, a stumble
Snash, abuse, Billingsgate
Snaw, snow; to snow
Snaw-broo, melted snow
Snawie, snowy
Sneck, snick, the latch of a door
Sned, to lop, to cut off
Sneeshin, snuff
Sneeshin-mill, a snuff-box
Snell, bitter, biting
Snick-drawing, trick-contriving, crafty
Snirtle, to laugh restrainedly
Snood, a ribbon for binding the hair
Snool, one whose spirit is broken with oppressive slavery; to submit tamely, to sneak
Snoove, to go smoothly and constantly; to sneak
Snowk, to scent or snuff, as a dog, &c.
Snowkit, scented, snuffed
Sonsie, having sweet, engaging looks; lucky jolly
Soom, to swim
Sooth, truth, a petty oath
Sough, a heavy sigh, a sound dying on the ear
Souple, flexible; swift
Souter, a shoemaker
Sowens, a dish made of oatmeal; the seeds of oatmeal soured, &c. flummery
Sowp, a spoonful, a small quantity of any thing liquid
Sowth, to try over a tune with a low whistle
Sowther, solder; to solder, to cement
Spae, to prophesy, to divine
Spaul, a limb
Spairge, to dash, to soil, as with mire
Spaviet, having the spavin
Spean, spane, to wean
Speat, or spate, a sweeping torrent, after rain or thaw
Speel, to climb
Spence, the country parlour
Spier, to ask, to inquire
Spier't, inquired
Splatter, a splutter, to splutter
Spleughan, a tobacco-pouch
Splore, a frolic; a noise, riot
Sprackle, sprachle, to clamber
Sprattle, to scramble
Spreckled, spotted, speckled
Spring, a quick air in music; a Scottish reel
Sprit, a tough-rooted plant, something like rushes
Sprittie, full of spirits
Spunk, fire, mettle; wit
Spunkie, mettlesome, fiery; will-o'wisp, or ignis fatuus
Spurtle, a stick, used in making oatmeal pudding or porridge
Squad, a crew, a party
Squatter, to flutter in water as a wild duck
Squattle, to sprawl
Squeel, a scream, a screech; to scream
Stacher, to stagger
Stack, a rick of corn, hay, &c.
Staggie, the diminutive of stag
Stalwart, strong, stout
Stan', to stand; stan't, did stand
Stane, a stone
Stang, an acute pain; a twinge; to sting
Stank, did stink; a pool of standing water
Stap, stop
Stark, stout

Startle, to run as cattle stung by the gad-fly
Staumrel, a blockhead ; half-witted
Staw, did steal ; to surfeit
Stech, to cram the belly
Stechin, cramming
Steek, to shut ; a stitch
Steer, to molest ; to stir
Steeve, firm, compacted
Stell, still
Sten, to rear as a horse
Sten't reared
Stents, tribute ; dues of any kind
Stey, steep ; steyest, steepest
Stibble, stubble ; stibble-rig, the reaper in harvest who takes the lead
Stick an' stow, totally, altogether
Stile, a crutch ; to halt, to limp
Stimpart, the eighth part of a Winchester bushel
Stirk, a cow or bullock a year old
Stock, a plant or root of colewort, cabbage, &c.
Stockin, a stocking ; Throwing the stockin, when the bride and bridegroom are put into bed, and the candle out, the former throws a stocking at random among the company, and the person whom it strikes is the next that will be married
Stoiter, to stagger, to stammer
Stooked, made up in shocks as corn
Stoor, sounding hollow, strong, and hoarse
Stot, an ox
Stoup, or stowp, a kind of jug or dish with a handle
Stour, dust, more particularly dust in motion
Stowlins, by stealth
Stown, stolen
Stoyte, to stumble
Strack, did strike
Strae, straw ; to die a fair strae heath, to die in bed
Straik, did strike
Straikit, stroked
Strappin', tall and handsome
Straught, straight, to straighten
Streek, stretched, tight ; to stretch
Striddle, to straddle
Stroan, to spout, to piss
Studdie, an anvil
Stumpie, diminutive of stump
Strunt, spirituous liquor of any kind ; to walk sturdily ; huff, sullenness
Stuff, corn or pulse of any kind
Sturt, trouble ; to molest
Sturtin, frighted
Sucker, sugar
Sud, should
Sugh, the continued rushing noise of wind or water
Southron, southern ; an old name for the English nation
Swaird, sward
Swall'd, swelled
Swank, stately, jolly
Swankie, or swanker, a tight strappin young fellow or girl
Swap, an exchange ; to barter
Swarf, to swoon ; a swoon
Swat, did sweat
Swatch, a sample
Swats, drink ; good ale
Sweaten, sweating
Sweer, lazy, averse ; dead-sweer, extremely averse
Swoor, swore, did swear
Swinge, to beat ; to whip
Swirl, a curve ; an eddying blast, or pool ; a knot in wood
Swirlie, knaggie, full of knots
Swith, get away
Swither, to hesitate in choice ; an irresolute wavering in choice
Syne, since, ago ; then

T

TACKETS, a kind of nails for driving into the heals of shoes
Tae, a toe ; three tae'd, having three prongs
Tairge, a target
Tak, to take ; takin, taking
Tamtallan, the name of a mountain
Tangle, a sea-weed
Tap, the top
Tapetless, heedless, foolish
Tarrow, to murmur at one's allowance
Tarrow't, murmured
Tarry-breeks, a sailor
Tauld, or tald, told
Taupie, a foolish, thoughtless young person
Tanted, or tautie, matted together ; spoken of hair or wool
Tawie, that allows itself peaceably to be handled ; spoken of a horse, cow, &c.
Teat, a small quantity
Teen, to provoke ; provocation
Tedding, spreading after the mower
Ten-hours bite, a slight feed to the horses while in the yoke, in the forenoon
Tent, a field-pulpit ; heed, caution ; to take heed ; to tend or herd cattle
Tentie, heedful, cautious
Tentless, heedless
Teugh, tough
Thack, thatch ; thack an' rape, clothing necessaries
Thae, these
Thairms, small guts ; fiddle-strings
Thankit, thanked
Theekit, thatched
Thegither, together
Themsel, themselves
Thick, intimate, familiar
Thieveless, cold, dry, spited ; spoken of a person's demeanour
Thir, these
Thirl, thrill
Thirled, thrilled, vibrated
Thole, to suffer, to endure
Thowe, a thaw ; to thaw
Thowless, slack, lazy
Thrang, throng ; a crowd
Thrapple, throat, windpipe
Thrave, twenty-four sheaves or two shocks of corn ; a considerable number
Thraw, to sprain, to twist ; to contradict
Thrawin, twisting, &c.
Thrawn, sprained, twisted ; contradicted
Threap, to maintain by dint of assertion
Threshin, thrashing
Threteen, thirteen
Thristle, thistle
Through, to go on with ; to make out

Throuther, pell-mell, confusedly
Thud, to make a loud intermittent noise
Thumpit, thumped
Thysel, thyself
Till't, to it
Timmer, timber
Tine, to lose; tint, lost
Tinkler, a tinker
Tint the gate, lost the way
Tip, a ram
Tippence, twopence
Tirl, to make as light noise; to uncover
Tirlin, uncovering
Tither, the other
Tittle, to whisper
Tittlin, whispering
Tocher, marriage portion
Tod, a fox
Toddle, to totter, like the walk of a child
Toddlin, tottering
Toom, empty, to empty
Toop, a ram
Toun, a hamlet; a farm-house
Tout, the blast of a horn or trumpet; to blow a horn, &c.
Tow, a rope
Towmond, a twelvemonth
Towzie, rough, shaggy
Toy, a very old fashion of female head-dress
Toyte, to totter like old age
Transmugrified, transmigrated, metamorphosed
Trashtrie, trash
Trews, trowsers
Trickie, full of tricks
Trig, spruce, neat
Trimly, excellently
Trow, to believe
Trowth, truth, a petty oath
Tryste, an appointment; a fair
Trysted, appointed; To tryste, to make an appointment
Try't, tried
Tug, raw hide, of which in old times plough-traces were frequently made
Tulzie, a quarrel; to quarrel, to fight
Twa, two
Twa-three, a few
'Twad, it would
Twal, twelve; twal-pennie worth, a small quantity, a penny-worth
N.B. One penny English is 12d Scotch
Twin, to part
Tyke, a dog

U

UNCO, strange, uncouth; very, very great, prodigious
Uncos, news
Unkenn'd, unknown
Unsicker, unsure, unsteady
Unskaith'd, undamaged, unhurt
Unweeting, unwittingly, unknowingly
Upo', upon
Urchin, a hedgehog

V

VAP'RIN, vapouring
Vera, very
Virl, a ring round a column, &c.
Vittle, corn of all kinds, food

W

WA', wall; wa's, walls
Wabster, a weaver
Wad, would; to bet; a bet, a pledge
Wadna, would not
Wae, wo; sorrowful
Waefu', woful, sorrowful, wailing
Waesucks! or waes me! alas! O the pity
Waft, the cross thread that goes from the shuttle through the web; woof
Wair, to lay out, to expend
Wale, choice; to choose
Waled, chose, chosen
Walie, ample, large, jolly; also an interjection of distress
Wame, the belly
Wamefu', a belly-full
Wanchancie, unlucky
Wanrestfu', restless
Wark, work
Wark-lume, a tool to work with
Warl, or warld, world
Warlock, a wizard
Warly, worldly, eager on amassing wealth
Warran, a warrant; to warrant
Warst, worst
Warstl'd or warsl'd, wrestled
Wastrie, prodigality
Wat, wet; I wat, I wot, I know
Water-brose, brose made of meal and water simply, without the addition of milk, butter, &c.
Wattle, a twig, a wand
Wauble, to swing, to reel
Waught, a draught
Waukit, thickened as fullers do cloth
Waukrife, not apt to sleep
Waur, worse; to worst
Waur't, worsted
Wean, or weanie, a child
Wearie, or weary; many a weary body, many a different person
Weasor, weasand
Weavir' the stocking. See Stocking
Wee, little; Wee things, little ones; Wee bit, a small matter
Weel, well; Weelfare, welfare
Weet, rain, wetness
Weird, fate
We'se, we shall
Wha, who
Whaizle, to wheeze
Whalpit, whelped
Whang, a leathern string; a piece of cheese, bread, &c., to give the strappado
Whare, where; Whare'er, wherever
Wheep, to fly nimbly, jerk; penny-wheep, small beer
Whase, whose
Whatreck, nevertheless
Whid, the motion of a hare, running but not frighted; a lie
Whiddin, running as a hare or cony
Whigmeleeries, whims, fancies, crotchets
Whingin', crying, complaining, fretting
Whirligigums, useless ornaments, trifling appendages
Whissle, a whistle; to whistle
Whist, silence; to hold one's whisht, to be silent

Whisk, to sweep, to lash
Whiskit, lashed
Whitter, a hearty draught of liquor
Whun-stane, a whin-stone
Whyles, whiles, sometimes
Wi', with
Wicht, wight, powerful, strong; inventive; of a superior genius
Wick, to strike a stone in an oblique direction; a term in curling
Wicker, willow (the smaller sort)
Wiel, a small whirlpool
Wifie, a diminutive or endearing term for wife
Wilyart, bashful and reserved; avoiding society or appearing awkward in it, wild, timid, strange
Wimple, to meander
Wimpl't, meandered
Wimplin', waving, meandering
Win, to win, to winnow
Win't, winded as a bottom of yarn
Win', wind; Win's, winds
Winna, will not
Winnock, a window
Winsome, hearty, vaunted, gay
Wintle, a staggering motion; to stagger, to reel
Winze, an oath
Wiss, to wish
Withouten, without
Wizen'd, hide-bound, dried, shrunk
Wonner, a wonder; a contemptuous appellation
Wons, dwells
Woo', wool
Woo, to court, to make love to
Woodie, a rope, more properly one made of withes or willows
Woor-bab, the garter knotted below the knee with a couple of loops
Wordy, worthy
Worset, worsted
Wow, an exclamation of pleasure or wonder
Wrack, to teaze, to vex
Wraith, a spirit, or ghost; an apparition exactly like a living person, whose appearance is said to forbode the person's approaching death
Wrang, wrong; to wrong
Wreeth, a drifted heap of snow
Wud, mad, distracted
Wumble, a wimble
Wyle, to beguile
Wyliecot, a flannel vest
Wyte, blame; to blame

Y

YAD, an old mare; a worn out horse
Ye; this pronoun is frequently used for thou
Yearns, longs much
Yearlings, born in the same year, coevals
Year is used both for singular and plural years
Yearn, earn, an eagle, an ospray
Yell, barren, that gives no milk
Yerk, to lash, to jerk
Yerkit, jerked, lashed
Yestreen, yesternight
Yett, a gate, such as is usually at the entrance into a farm-yard or field
Yill, ale
Yird, earth
Yokin', yoking; a bout
Yont, beyond
Yoursel' yourself
Yowe, a ewe
Yowie, diminutive of yowe
Yule, Christmas

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